

## CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Hunger winter: the German checkpoint at Amersfoort ... p.12

Dordt's jubilee: celebrating a gift from many hands ..... p.10



59th year of publication

## Bush's appearance at Calvin commencement brings protests, cheers

Harry der Nederlanden

The announcement that U.S. President George Bush would be giving the commencement address at Calvin this year raised quite a flap, not just at Calvin among the students and professors but in the CRC supporting community as well. Some, like our own Ty Hofman, celebrated it as an honor (a coup) for Calvin, some complained that it identified Calvin and the CRC too closely with the dubious policies of the right and, of course, with the Iraq war.

The debate quickly heated up on campus, in the newspapers, on the internet and even on T.V. Given the polarization in American society, that was to be expected. Those on the right feared protests by Calvin students and professors would bring shame on Calvin and lead to a loss of support by conservatives. Those on the left feared that Calvin was selling its Reformed vision for the sake of status or for a bowl of diluted political pottage. Both sides threatened to withhold support and/or withdraw their children. Those in the middle wondered what the flap was all about.

Some of those in the middle (like myself) started leaning left when they learned that Bush had displaced Nick Wolterstorff as commencement speaker. Given the choice as to which is the greater honor – to have Bush or Wolterstorff speak – I'd choose the latter. Disinviting Wolterstorff, or asking him to speak at a brunch, did not strike me as gracious.

David Hoekema, a Calvin philosophy prof, wrote a short piece for the Christian Century in which he weighed how to respond. "Simply do nothing?" he asked himself.

"But this seems like a cowardly withdrawal," he said, "given that I can't count the ways in which the Bush vision for America and the world diverges from my



understanding of a kingdom in which justice counts for more than power, faithfulness for more than wealth, and compassionate understanding for more than 'preventive' war. The prophets had a lot to say about braggarts and bullies, after all. When Israel's kings built a case for war on a tissue of lies, or told the poor to look after themselves because the rich could not afford to feed them, Jeremiah and Amos did not zip their lips but made noisy nuisances of themselves."

So he and about one-third of the faculty placed an ad in the local press. "By their deeds ye shall know them," begins the ad. "Your deeds, Mr. President – neglecting the needy to coddle the rich, desecrating the environment, and misleading the country into war – do not exemplify the faith we live by.

"Moreover, many of your supporters are using religion as a weapon to divide our nation and advance a narrow partisan agenda. ... We urge you not to use Calvin

College as a platform to advance policies that violate the school's religious principles."

Harry der Nederlanden

First the French and now the Dutch in separate referendums have rejected the new constitution for the European Union. They have done so in a quite resounding manner. In both countries the Nays outnumber the Yeas by a wide margin. In both countries voter turn-out was much higher than expected – almost 70 percent in France and over 60 percent in The Netherlands. This, despite the fact that, according to newspapers in those countries, between 80 and 90 percent of the political leaders urged support.

The new charter has been three years in the making and was designed to further integrate the various countries who are members of the Union. Several other members

Charles Colson used his widely circulated Breakpoint column to scold the protesting profs, refuting the charges leveled against Bush. He concluded: "John Calvin, the great reformer for whom this once proud school was named, said, 'The first duty of subjects towards their rulers is to entertain the most honorable views of their office, recognizing it as a delegated jurisdiction from God.' People in office should be held in 'esteem and veneration,'

and he added that we are to 'bear patiently their failures.'"

The Bush critics, of course, saw Bush's choice of Calvin as political from the get-go and an attempt to co-opt Christian faith. But others complained that it was precisely the protesting profs and students who were turning it into a political event.

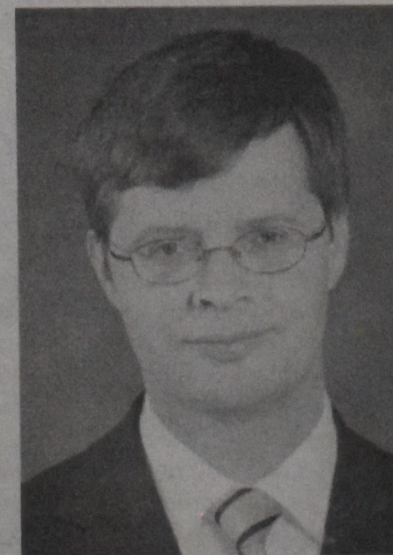
Prof. Randall Bytwerk of Calvin's communication department argued before the event that Bush and his speechwriters know better than to turn a graduation ceremony into a partisan political event and lamented that some staff chose to heighten political tensions.

It turned out that Bytwerk was right. Bush delivered a bipartisan speech spiced with humor, yet stating some worthy themes. At its heart one might detect a celebration of sphere-sovereignty.

See Commencement p. 3...

## Nee! Non! Dutch and French voters balk at further European integration

have already approved it, their political leaders choosing to do so



Dutch P.M. Jan-Peter Balkenende says he'll abide by the results

without a referendum. British P.M. Blair has promised to hold a referendum next year, but perhaps that will now be considered superfluous. Until recently, the British were considered to be the only ones who might turn down the new ground-plan. Analysts and journalists are busy speculating why citizens in France and the Netherlands, who have for decades willingly followed their leaders toward the golden grail of a unified Europe, have now suddenly balked.

Not long ago the EU expanded from 15 to 25 countries, embracing most of eastern Europe as well. The latter are expected to ratify the constitution without holding referendums.

In the lead-up to the referendums See Voters balk p. 3...



## News

## Commencement Address by U.S. President George W. Bush given at Calvin College

## THE PRESIDENT:

Thank you, President Byker; members of the Calvin faculty; distinguished guests; parents, friends, family – and, most importantly, the Class of 2005. (Applause.)

Thanks for having me. I was excited to come back to Calvin, and I was just telling Laura the other night about what fun it would be to come to Calvin College. I said, you know, Laura, I love being around so many young folks. You know, it gives me a chance to relive my glory days in academia. (Laughter.) She said, George, that's not exactly how I would describe your college experience. (Laughter.)

She also said one other thing I think the graduates will appreciate hearing, a good piece of advice. She said, the folks here are here to get their diploma, not to hear from an old guy go on too long. (Laughter.) So with that sage advice, here goes.

I bring a great message of hope and freedom to Calvin College Class of 2005: There is life after Professor Vanden Bosch and English 101. (Laughter.) Someday you will appreciate the grammar and verbal skills you learned here. (Laughter and applause.) And if any of you wonder how far a mastery of the English language can take you, just look what it did for me. (Laughter and applause.)

I thank the moms and dads here for your sacrifice and for your love. (Applause.) I want to thank the faculty for your hard work and dedication. (Applause.) And, again, I congratulate the Class of 2005. Soon you will collect your degrees and say goodbyes to a school that has been your home – and you will take your rightful place in a country that offers you the greatest freedom and opportunity on Earth. (Applause.) I ask that you use what you've learned to make your own contributions to the story of American freedom.

The immigrants who founded Calvin College came to America for the freedom to worship, and they built this great school on the sturdy ground of liberty. They saw in the American "experiment" the world's best hope for freedom – and they weren't the only ones excited by what they saw. In 1835, a young civil servant and aristocrat from France, named Alexis de Tocqueville, would publish a book

about America that still resonates today.

The book is called *Democracy in America*, and in it this young Frenchman said that the secret to America's success was our talent for bringing people together for the common good. De Tocqueville wrote that tyrants maintained their power by "isolating" their citizens – and that Americans guaranteed their freedom by their remarkable ability to band together without any direction from government. The America he described offered the world something it had never seen before: a working model of a thriving democracy where opportunity was unbounded, where virtue was strong, and where citizens took responsibility for their neighbors.

Tocqueville's account is not just the observations of one man – it is the story of our founding. It is not just a description of America at a point in time – it is an agenda for our time. Our Founders rejected both a radical individualism that makes no room for others, and the dreary collectivism that crushes the individual. They gave us instead a society where individual freedom is anchored in communities. And in this hopeful new century, we have a great goal: to renew this spirit of community and thereby renew the character and compassion of our nation.

First, we must understand that the character of our citizens is essential to society. In a free and compassionate society, the public good depends on private character. That character is formed and shaped in institutions like family, faith, and the many civil and – social and civic organizations, from the Boy Scouts to the local Rotary Clubs. The future success of our nation depends on our ability to understand the difference between right and wrong and to have the strength of character to make the right choices. Government cannot create character, but it can and should respect and support the institutions that do.

Second, we must understand the importance of keeping power close to the people. Local people know local problems, they know the names and faces of their neighbors. The heart and soul of America is in our local communities; it is in the citizen school boards that determine how our children are educated; it's in city councils

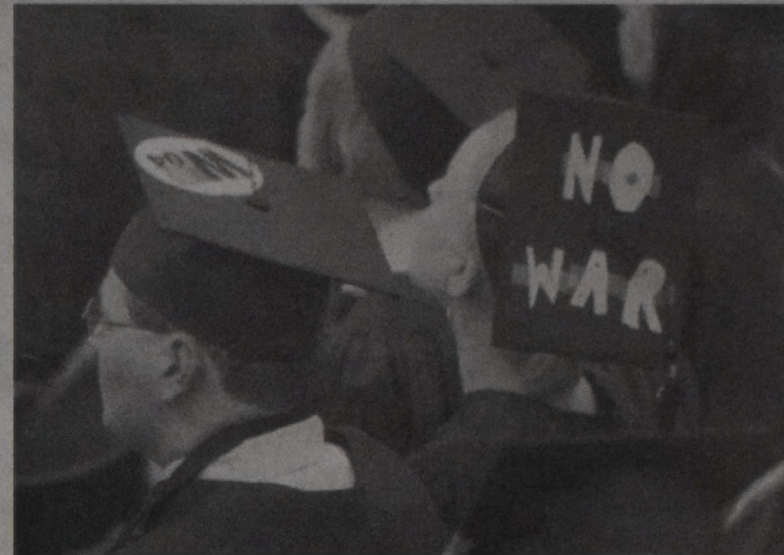
and state legislators that reflect the unique needs and priorities of the people they serve; it's in the volunteer groups that transform towns and cities into caring communities and neighborhoods.

In the years to come, I hope that you'll consider joining these associations or serving in government – because when you come together to serve a cause greater than yourself, you will energize your communities and help build a more just and compassionate America.

Finally, we must understand that it is by becoming active in our communities that we move beyond our narrow interests. In today's complex world, there are a lot of things that pull us apart. We need to support and encourage the institutions and pursuits that bring us together. And we learn how to come together by participating in our churches and temples and mosques and synagogues; in civil rights associations; in our PTAs and Jaycees; in our gardening and book clubs, interest groups and chambers of commerce; in our service groups – from soup kitchens to homeless shelters.

All these organizations promote the spirit of community and help us acquire the "habits of heart" that are so vital to a free society. And because one of the deepest values of our country is compassion, we must never turn away from any citizen who feels isolated from the opportunities of America. Our faith-based and community groups provide the armies of compassion that help people who wonder if the American Dream is meant for them. These armies of compassion are the great engines of social change, they serve individual and local needs, and they have been found at the front of every great movement in American history.

The history of forming associations dedicated to serving others is as old as America, itself. From abolition societies and suffrage movements to immigrant aid groups and prison reform ministries, America's social entrepreneurs have often been far ahead of our government in identifying and meeting the needs of our fellow countrymen. Because they are closer to the people they serve, our faith-based and community organizations deliver better results than government. And they have a human touch: When a person in need knocks on the door of a faith-



based or community organization, he or she is welcomed as a brother or a sister.

No one understood this better than another 19th century visitor to America whose name is well known to Calvin College: Abraham Kuyper. Kuyper was a Dutchman who would be elected his nation's prime minister, and he knew all about the importance of associations because he founded so many of them – including two newspapers, a political party, and a university. Kuyper contrasted the humanizing influence of independent social institutions with the "mechanical character of government." And in a famous speech right here in Grand Rapids, he urged Dutch immigrants to resist the temptation to retreat behind their own walls – he told them to go out into their adopted America and make a true difference as true Christian citizens.

Our government is encouraging all Americans to make a difference through our faith-based and community initiative; we're mobilizing Americans to volunteer through the USA Freedom Corps. We'll do our part, but, ultimately, service is up to you. It is your choice to make. As your generation takes its place in the world, all of you must make this decision: Will you be a spectator, or a citizen? To make a difference in this world, you must be involved. By serving a higher calling here or abroad, you'll make your lives richer and build a more hopeful future for our world.

At Calvin College, you take this call to service to heart. You serve as "agents of renewal" across the Earth. You volunteer for Big Brothers/Big Sisters to

mentor young people. You work at Bethany Christian Services here in Grand Rapids, one of the best-known adoption services in America. A former Calvin student and professor, Vern Ehlers, serves in the halls of Congress. As the Class of 2005 goes out into the world, I ask you to embrace this tradition of service and help set an example for all Americans. As Americans we share an agenda that calls us to action – a great responsibility to serve and love others, a responsibility that goes back to the greatest commandment.

This isn't a Democratic idea. This isn't a Republican idea. This is an American idea. (Applause.) It has sustained our nation's liberty for more than 200 years. The Founders knew that too much government leads to oppression, but that too little government can leave us helpless and alone. So they built a free society with many roots in community. And to keep the tree of liberty standing tall in the century before us, you must nourish those roots.

Today, the Calvin Class of 2005 looks out on an America that continues to be defined by the promise of our Declaration of Independence. We're still the nation our Founders imagined, where individual freedom and opportunity is unbounded, where community is vibrant, where compassion keeps us from resting until all our citizens take their place at the banquet of freedom and equality. And with your help, we'll all do our part to transform our great land one person and one community at a time.

Thank you for having me and may God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country. (Applause.)



## Politics

### Voters balk ... continued from p. 1

in France and Holland, leaders warned that a rejection would lead to an economic crisis, the dissolution of the EU, the balkanization of Europe, and even a recurrence of old hostilities. After the No vote in France, however, they were quickly seeking to put a better face on the post-referendum situation. Things were going fairly well without the constitution, they reminded the world, and there's no reason they can't continue the same way.

The process that led to the present constitution was begun shortly after the Second World War, in part to remove the sources of conflict between the nations of Europe (primarily Germany and France) and in part to provide a common front against the Soviet threat. It began as a customs union among six countries and gradually evolved into much more. The public may have become less enthusiastic about greater integration, some suggest, because the original sources of motivation – war and the USSR – have been removed.

Strongest opposition in both France and The Netherlands has come from both the left and the right, according to analysts. Some oppose further integration because they say it means the further dissolution of local economies by globalization. French critics referred to it as the Anglo-Saxonization of France, appealing to French pride about their own traditions. In Britain and The Netherlands, on the other hand, many opposed further integration because it means an expansion of the nanny state and of deeper state interference in people's lives.

It did not help the Yes cause

that the introduction of a single currency, the Euro, in 2002 has caused greater inflation, especially in Holland. The Dutch are reminded of that every time they buy a cup of coffee. But commentators seem to agree that people voted No for many reasons, most of which have very little to do with the constitution itself. An editorial in the *Christian Science Monitor* describes the document as "nothing more than a useful simplification of the EU's existing treaties – a way to smooth the workings of the cumbersome 25-member EU, and to give Europe as a whole more foreign policy oomph."

The proposed constitution bears no resemblance to the constitutional documents of either Canada or the U.S., which are relatively concise statements of broad principles. Giscard d'Estaing, the primary author, tossed in everything including regulations for owning vacation homes in Malta and instructions on how to assemble your bicycle. The final document weighed in at over 300 pages. Its size and its unreadable style symbolize for many what it will be like to be ruled from Brussels, the capitol of the new Superstate. (Journalists seem to have trouble counting the pages: they report the charter as being 190, 250, 300 and 450 pages long. Maybe some just stopped reading before the end.)

Defenders of the constitution deny that it means the further alienation of government from the people. One of the central purposes for drafting the document was to create greater transparency and to install safeguards for local sovereignty. However, it was done in the

style of bureaucratic experts and has not been able to win the confidence, it seems, of ordinary citizens. Hence, it lacks legitimacy. Some speak of "a democratic deficit."

Along with anxieties that their country's traditions and values will be absorbed into a homogenizing super-state, voters were also motivated by fears that workers from other countries like Poland would enter their country and create unemployment and drive down wages. Anxieties about the entry of Turkey and immigration from Turkey have also played a role. Agriculture and industry in France have been protected to some extent from some of the effects of global competition. Those protections would be diminished, farmers and workers fear, under the new order. Like Germany and Italy, France's economy has been in the doldrums of late, and the No vote is in part a vote of no confidence in economic reforms.

But other resentments also played a role. In The Netherlands many are not happy that they pay more per capita to the EU than any other country, and they did not react well to recent actions by France and Germany that violated EU rules for national self-interest. Many also see little promise in the French ambition to give Europe a

single voice on the world stage to counter-balance the power of the U.S. The Dutch suspect it will only mean that their small voice gets buried.

Nine countries have ratified the charter, and leaders in Brussels have repeated several times that the process would go on even if France and The Netherlands turned it down. The Dutch referendum is actually not binding on the government; it is considered advisory. But with a high voter turnout, it can hardly be set aside.

The constitution requires all parties to approve it, but only if six or more countries reject it, is it considered dead. Analysts like John Palmer of the European Policy Center, a think-tank based in Brussels, say, however, that the present constitution will not be

rewritten or renegotiated. If Britain, the greatest eurosceptic of all, rejects the charter, it stands little chance of being revived.

The No votes in The Netherlands and France most agree are an indication that the political elite has lost touch with the citizenry. That is hardly exclusive to Europe. Look at our own parliamentarians. They seem to have lost touch not just with the voters but with reality.

[With files from the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Globe and Mail, the National Post, AP, Reformatorisch Dagblad, Fries Dagblad, The Economist, the Guardian, Foreign Policy, openDemocracy, and the Christian Science Monitor.]



EU Headquarters in Brussels

### Commencement ... continued from p. 1

I'm sure Bytwerk gave it an A+. (We've printed the entire speech so you can see for yourself.)

Many dissenting professors did pin "God is not a Democrat or a Republican" buttons to their academic gowns and several students adorned their mortarboards with stickers, but everyone was civil and well-behaved. The President got some standing ovations, the longest for repeating the bipartisan slogan on the dissenting professors pins.

Some newspapers, hearing of the dissent on the Calvin campus, speculated that it might be an eye-opener for Bush to learn that not

everyone out here in the heartland wears the same color of Christianity. But he'd have to be pretty obtuse not to have known that already. His staff would certainly have known what kind of school Calvin is.

Jim Wallis, commenting in *Sojourners* magazine after the event, wrote: "The events at Calvin, along with the growing crowds at our events around the country, are visible signs that the Religious Right does not speak for all Christians, even all evangelical Christians. What I hear, from one end of this country to the other, is how tired we are of ideological religion and how hungry we are for prophetic faith. The students and

faculty at Calvin College are the most recent sign of that hunger."

About a week prior to commencement, Wallis drew a standing-room only crowd in the chapel and Gezon auditorium.

All in all, I think the Calvin faculty and students conducted themselves admirably. The protests should not reflect badly on the college; on the contrary, they only demonstrate that it is a lively and diverse community that is willing to act on its beliefs. Freedom to dissent is not only vital for a democracy but also for an academic community. Sorry, Colson, but I think this "once proud school" has nothing to hang its head over.

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## Editorial

# Little people, little places and a big project

Harry der Nederlanden

To celebrate its 50th jubilee, Dordt College invited several speakers to speak on campus during the past year. One of the speakers was Nick Wolterstorff – that's right, the fellow who was displaced by President George Bush at Calvin's commencement (see p. 1). His speech is one of several you can listen to on the Dordt website, a way for us to participate in their celebrations.

I did that recently – as a way of paying tribute to both Dordt and Calvin at the same time. The speech is actually a celebration of the work that goes on in all our Christian colleges – Dordt and Calvin, but also Redeemer, Kings and Trinity. Wolterstorff spoke on the project of Christian learning as something bigger, as something vital and growing far beyond the boundaries of "our" institutions.

In the past, explained Wolterstorff, Christian colleges pursued a kind of learning that required the scholar to strip off all particularities like ethnicity and religion. These were seen as prejudices, biases, obstructions to a scholar's objectivity. Nowadays Christian learning has by and large rejected that approach. It is not necessary to strip yourself of your identity to engage in good scholarship. In fact, it is impossible.

Much of the impetus for this new approach, said Wolterstorff, came from the neo-Calvinist vision of Abraham Kuyper. To Kuyper, putting aside one's faith to study God's creation seemed like madness. Kuyper stressed holism in religion: it is about the whole person who is engaged with the whole cosmos because Christ has redeemed all things.

In many ways, Wolterstorff's lecture resembled the drama staged by the traveling troupe of Dordt students (see p. 10): it strove to show that the project in which our Christian colleges are engaged is not a tired cliché, but that it is an exciting and vital enterprise.

How has this project fared over the last 50 years – the span of Dordt's existence – asked Wolterstorff.

In North America, 50 years ago almost no one had

even heard of it, not even in church affiliated colleges. Most of those colleges really had little or no idea of what they were doing. They had a two-level view of scholarship: competent learning crowned with a few arguments for the existence of God and for the reliability of Scripture. Today, he said, that has completely changed. In the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities, an organization with over 100 members in North America, the dominant model is now the neo-Kuyperian one. This vision is also very influential in various professional organizations like the Society of Christian Philosophers, which has some 1300 members. And there are also similar organizations for lawyers, scientists and literature professors.

These Christian voices are beginning to be listened to in secular organizations as well. Conferences are giving room for Christian academics to speak from their perspective. In fact, said Wolterstorff, at a recent academic conference the well-known literary theorist Stanley Fish remarked that, if you wanted to fill the hall, all you had to do was to announce a panel with religion in the title. People are looking for guidance as well as knowledge, said Fish. Religion is where the action is.

The rest of Wolterstorff's speech was devoted to a self-critique, to pointing out a few flaws he saw in the project as it is now conducted. One of these, he suggested, is the notion often put forward that we must start over from the beginning. Nobody starts over from scratch, he cautioned.

What we can and must do, he argued, is recover Christian traditions that have been forgotten. More and more we have allowed secularists to tell the story, but we must tell our own story. Behind us is a long tradition of Christian reflection on economics, politics, philosophy and the arts which we've lost. We must refuse to let secularists tell that story, for they turn it to their own ends. The beginnings of human rights, for example, are not found in the Enlightenment, said Wolterstorff, but in the Judeo-Christian tradition.

In the past, too, the neo-Kuyperian tradition has put too much of a stress on difference. Wolterstorff thought we should put the stress on fidelity: we are called to be faithful in our various vocations. Differences will emerge by themselves.

One place, however, where we should seek to be different is in the way we treat one another, always treating others with respect even when we strongly disagree.

Some of us will recall those early, heady days – the late-night discussions, the big dreams, the inflated rhetoric, the lack of humility. We did entertain visions of entirely new beginnings, perhaps even an entire re-structuration of the faculties. Even though we had scant knowledge of the long traditions Wolterstorff alludes to, we were quite sure they were all either guilty of dualism or synthesis. But by way of excuse, I must add that revolutionary rhetoric was in the air, and it was contagious.

We often hammered on the antithesis too, as if by shouting we could assert that difference. The pursuit of difference – Christian uniqueness – wasn't all bad. At its heart was the conviction that academic work must be a witness; it must at some point make him who is the source of all meaning visible. But in our eagerness and zealotry, we often alienated as many people as we

converted to "our cause," reluctant to leave anything to the Spirit, who is the real transformer of hearts and minds and institutions.

Dordt College was a very small school when I became a student there in 1962, and it was located in a small town planted amidst the Iowa cornfields. But for those of us who studied there, it became a window on the cosmos, a way into disciplines that connected us with scholars in other parts of the world and a place where we were introduced to traditions that stretch back many hundreds of years. Our lives as students (as I've said on p. 10) became interwoven with the lives of other students from distant places, with professors who were themselves still learning, and with the community that gave birth to the college.

But our lives also became entwined with thinkers both living and dead by the magic of the word and books. And lecturers from elsewhere. I still have a copy of the speech on curriculum ("By what standard?") given by Wolterstorff in the Dordt gymnasium in the early 60s. And I can recall the excitement when we heard that our overture to invite Hendrik Hart to speak was honored by the administration.

Although Dordt's library was embarrassingly small in those early years, back in the stacks I found bound copies of magazines I'd never heard of before. I read debates between Cornelius van Til and several professors at Calvin in back issues of the *Reformed Journal*, *Torch and Trumpet* and the *Westminster Theological Journal*. I discovered that at one time a group of neo-Calvinists started a journal discussing economics. And in the philosophy section I discovered Dooyeweerd's three-volume critique. Although in 1962 no one at Dordt was talking about Dooyeweerd, I remembered the name from Van Riessen's book, and soon I was hooked.

Had I gone to the University of Alberta as I had first intended, would I have been exposed to such traditions? Perhaps, to some extent, for the project of Christian scholarship also reached onto secular campuses and does so even more today. There are issues of the long-defunct magazine *Credo* kicking around in our office. Quite a number of the contributors to that magazine for Christian students were located on secular campuses.

Nevertheless, without thinkers like Dooyeweerd, Van Riessen, Runner, Wolterstorff, Plantinga and a host of others whose careers were nurtured on Christian campuses, this world of scholarship would not exist. However imperfect these institutions, however faulty the professors, these institutions have been a great force for good, for deepening and widening our understanding of the historic Christian faith. Those who established them and support them have done a good work. Well done and thank you.

I know scholars also cause us headaches. They like to play up differences of interpretation, because originality is highly prized in the world of scholarship. But above all scholarship is a way of deploying the powers of the word to connect us, to get us communicating, to pursue community, to mobilize us for service. All those efforts are in vain, however, if the One who is the source of all unity and communion is left out.

## Christian Courier

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## Letters

### "After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back."

In an article in the *Washington Post*, May 21, 2005, James Watt, Reagan's secretary of the interior 1981 to 1983, refutes statements attributed to him by some environmental groups. He says they took some of them out of context and fabricated others.

Bill Moyers repeated some of these bogus statements in a speech, and from there they spread across the internet. They even appeared in a couple of *CC* columns. So we publish some of Watt's remarks here to correct the record.

In his speech, Bill Moyers said, "James Watt told the U.S. Congress that protecting natural resources was unimportant in light of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. In public testimony he said, 'After the last tree is felled, Christ will come back.' Beltway elites snickered. The press corps didn't know what he was talking about. But James Watt was serious. So were his compatriots out across the country. They are the people who believe the Bible is literally true — one-third of the American electorate if a recent Gallup poll is accurate."

James Watt replies: "I never said it. Never believed it. Never even thought it. I know no Christian who believes or preaches such error. The Bible commands conservation — that we as Christians be careful stewards of the land and resources entrusted to us by the Creator."

Barbara R. Rossing of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, picked up Moyer's accusation and developed it further. Rossing contended that Christians who believe in the Rapture presume that there is no need for stewardship of natural resources because of the expected return of the Lord. Watt quotes from her book: "Watt told U.S. senators that we are living at the brink of the end-times and implied that this justifies clear-cutting the nation's forest and other unsustainable environmental policies. When he was asked about preserving the environment for future generations, Watt told his Senate confirmation hearing, 'I do not know how many future generations we can count on before the Lord returns.' Watt's 'use it or lose it' view of the world's

resources is a perspective shared by the Rapture proponents."

On Feb. 14, the National Council of Churches, too, picked up the theme, issuing a statement "in an effort to refute" a false gospel that suggests "humans are 'called' to exploit the Earth without care for how our behavior impacts the rest of God's creation.... This false gospel still finds its proud preachers and continues to capture its adherents among emboldened political leaders and policymakers."

When Watt contacted the NCC to ask for a list of those promoting this false gospel, they gave Bill Moyers as their authority, said Watt.

Bob Edgar, NCC's General Secretary, responded to Watt's charges that evangelicals on the right, himself included, were being unfairly maligned, not by apologizing but by saying, in effect, actions speak louder than words.

Although we may not agree with the environmental policies of Watt, the slapdash way in which people tar all evangelicals with the same brush is disturbing. Also disturbing is the way inaccuracies in reporting are swept aside, as if it doesn't matter that men like Watt and Bush are accurately quoted or portrayed — as long as an ideological point is driven home.

In his reply, Edgar says, "The truth is that well-intentioned people of faith have, whether deliberately or not, participated in practices that have harmed God's Earth and many of its inhabitants. We must speak boldly and courageously to put an end to this tragedy."

Right, and we may well agree that neither Watt and Bush have done that with the fervor we'd like to see. But that does not mean we have the right to put a false gospel in their mouths. I'd have preferred to see Edgar's response begin with an apology and then move to an invitation for mainline and evangelical churches and groups to join in a common cause in promoting better stewardship.

Harry der Nederlanden

### Secular argument

I find it exceedingly troubling to read that the CRC should "keep pace with the changing times." Regardless of the topic of the article, in this case it was women in office, this never should be an argument to do anything. In Canada we now are "allowed" to kill our babies, marry a person of the same gender, and write child pornography in the name of keeping up with changing times. This is a secular argument. It is my understanding that any true church bases all their decisions on what the Bible says and not what the so-called Charter of Rights or society says. Perhaps even worse is that your column degenerates into a male versus female polemic. To pit man against woman is the Devil's work, work he started in the garden and he will continue to the end.

P. Delleman Owen Sound, Ontario

### Constantly criticizing others

The *Christian Courier* of May 15 has two articles that made me wonder whether I should continue reading your paper; under letters to the editor, "Extraordinary opportunity?" by Jake Kuiken and Bert Hielema's article about Pope, politics, etc.

Last fall I was part of a workgroup going to Nicaragua. On the way home some of us took issue with the high wages paid to government officials, at the same time paying school teachers starvation wages. I reminded my fellow sojourners (the Gomery inquiry had just started) that we were really not that much different from some South American banana republic. The ruling party was caught with their hand in the till. And still telling us that they are the only party that can lead us to the promised land.

Our 18-year-old grandson just joined the US army. When I asked him why, his answer was, "My country needs me." A bit more patriotism and a bit less looking at the splinter in our neighbor's eye would get us a long way. If there is one thing I have learned in my life it is this, constantly criticizing others does not make me a better person. In truth, the opposite is more often the case.

Hilke Wieringa,  
Brampton, Ontario

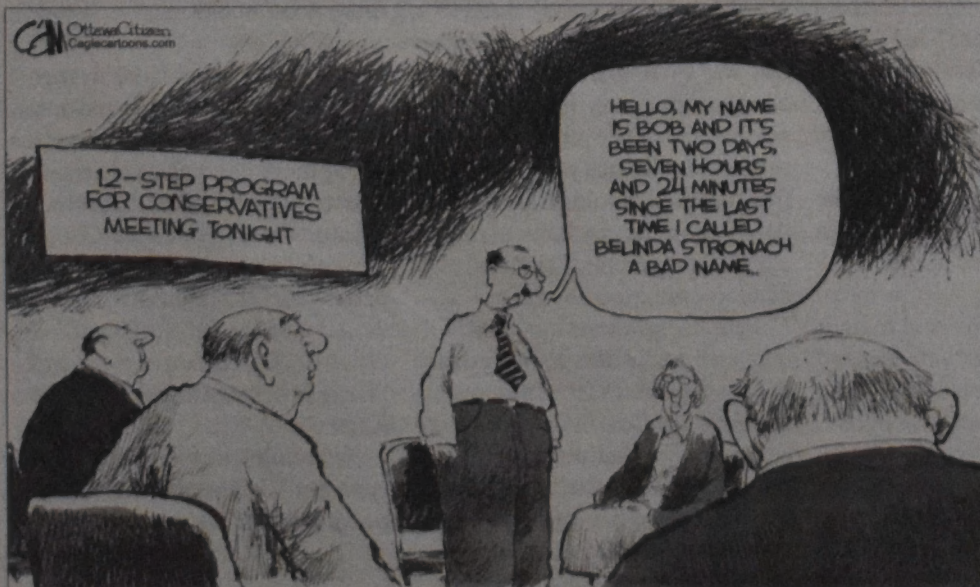
### A little wine for your stomach's sake?

Sipping a little wine now and then while basking in the thought it's also good for you? Think again. That's right, scientists are revising their earlier findings. A recent Australian study concluded that even moderate amounts of wine and beer could lead to higher blood pressure.

An article in the latest *Scientific American*, "Obesity: An Overblown Epidemic?" also questions recent claims by medical scientists that even a little excess weight can cause diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and a host of other medical consequences. The Center for Disease Control in the U.S. drastically revised its own calculations of the number of Americans felled by obesity-related illnesses each year, cutting its estimate by almost 45 percent.

A CDC epidemiologist said that despite their weight gains, Americans are healthier than at any time in the past 40 years.

It seems that we must take scientific reports with a grain of salt — and perhaps a glass of wine. There's such a thing as being too careful.



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## 60th Anniversary

## A look back - issues in the 50's

## Expedition

God is the prism  
by whom the spectrum  
is formed.

the seven colors of  
his love  
fall across my hands.

finding myself  
on Mount Ararat  
I see  
in the sky the sign.

before me  
passes the archeological  
expedition  
in search of Noah's ark.

but the sign –  
they do not see the sign.

Durk vander Ploeg

A Frisian poem by a young poet selected for comment by R.K. (Remkes Kooistra? – a guess). He takes the poem – both the poem itself and its content – as a sign of God's faithfulness, for it brings to expression the faith of the next generation.

In the Feb. 4, 1955 issue of CC, T.C. van Kooten began a series of articles on Canadianization, instructing the new immigrants on how to integrate into Canadian society.

There are lots of externals to overcome, he admits, such as differences in language and work methods (the Dutch invariably complained about the inefficiency of Canadians), but the real difficulty is within. The Calvinistic immigrant finds that in his new country different values predominate "and these are the things that make for the greatest tensions."

Here are some of the differences noted by Van Kooten in the early 1950s:

1. The European family was parent centred, while the Canadian family is child centred. North America is the place of the future, where the parent is sacrificed for the child.

[Freud thought this was universal: chop-chop – down goes the father and

up pops the son. But perhaps he had a guilt complex about denying his own uncultured Jewish immigrant ancestors.]

2. Home life was more prominent in Europe than here, which creates different expectations between parents and children.

[Especially if the son bought an old car even before dad got one!]

3. Social relations between men and women, employer and employee, professionals and working people are quite different.

[I overheard my father describing to my mother how a professor helped him haul stuff from the truck and clean up at the U of Alberta. "A Dutch professor would never have done that!" he concluded.]

4. Europeans are more reserved and more mature, while here people are more open and naive.

[Perhaps Van Kooten's own origins are more visible in this judgment. Where I grew up the Dutch were not necessarily more reserved than others – quite the contrary.]

5. Whereas in Europe things were more set, more stable and traditional, here the orientation is to the future. [Van Kooten seems to be reworking the frontier thesis of American history. But the immigrant communities themselves were different than those of their home countries, for they consisted of the young, healthy and most daring. Deaths per 100 were very low in those days, for the old folks were absent.]

6. North Americans are more pragmatic, while Europeans are more aware of principles, so they tend to see N. Americans as superficial. [I don't know to what extent Van Kooten is characterizing "Europeans" or Kuypersians accustomed to confessional politics.]

7. People tend to be judged

more as individuals here than by their social status or position. [Almost every Dutchman I knew thought this was great – except perhaps for some pastors who wanted more respect like the Dominee in Holland.]

8. Europeans are more nation-alistic. [Right. Hard to get excited about a queen who lives across the Atlantic.]

9. Europeans tend to be more suspicious of others until they've proved themselves to be trustworthy. [Actually, Canadians weren't always more trusting – only if they saw you to be like them. Certain ethnic groups were treated with suspicion.]

10. North America has a strong tradition of religious tolerance, at least on the personal level. It has never had the religious wars or bitter ecclesiastical conflicts that have stamped themselves on the European character. [The much-maligned privatization of religion did have some good side-effects: it removed some of the fear factor.]

These are just ten potential sources of tension named by Van Kooten, who reflected on these matters at some length with a pastoral purpose. Such tensions, he said, are to be expected and are perfectly normal. They shouldn't cause undue concern. But if you set yourself wholly against the new situation or if you try to jettison the past wholesale, then you're asking for trouble.

In a subsequent article Van Kooten asks: After being formed as a child in a quite different environment, how quickly can an immigrant become a "real Canadian"? He warns: "One cannot make the changeover by an act of will." A person cannot reconstruct his identity overnight, warned Van Kooten.

He counseled that while some children will adapt very quickly, some older immigrants will remain attached to Holland in their hearts to their dying day and continue to speak of "The Canadians" as those others. Their children, raised here, will grow up and adapt to the new land. However, they will also imbibe much from their home life which

## Oil from the prairie, profit for the whole country



is still imbued with much from the old country. Only the third generation will be completely native, he said.

Some good wisdom and leadership got passed along in the pages of CC.

New limits put on immigration by the new Progressive Conservative government in 1957 raised concerns in immigrant circles. CC put such fears to rest. So many immigrants had entered Canada in the first months of 1957 that the brakes had to be applied. And, added the PC minister, the Liberals started it. The government was not turning against immigration.

An article by J.M. Jonker on CRC Synod 1957 pleads for regional synods. After all, he argues, the church is not a production line in which every part is identical. Such uniformity would turn the church into a graveyard. Just as every believer has his own identity and every congregation its own identity, so the Canadian churches have their own identity. We are not the same psychologically as the Americans, he declares. And the acknowledgement of such diversity need not threaten our unity.

For those churches that felt ready to make the revolutionary move, Synod 1957 granted permission to allow women to vote at congregational meetings. "The fact that synod did not make a binding ruling but left it up to the local consistory is an indicator of wisdom as well as of a proper

respect for the authority of the local congregation," says Jonker.

The editor of CC defends his decision to report on the CRC Synod by arguing that, although CC is not a church paper, the 100th anniversary of the CRC does merit attention.

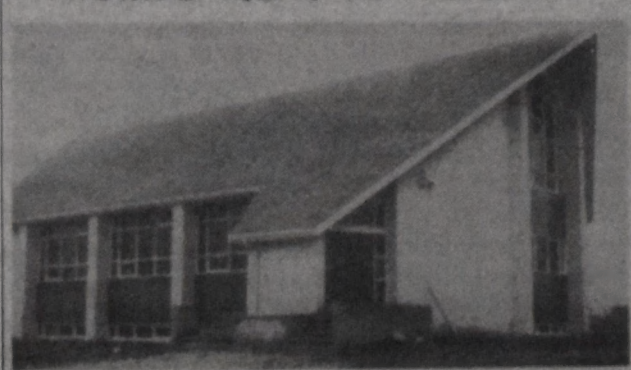
Rev. Martin Vrieze complains about the paucity of bookstores in Canada and remarks that 13 times as many books per capita are published in the Netherlands as in America. He's not joining the chorus of those who like to sing the praises of the old country, he says. He poses a question: "Do you think you can learn to understand the foundations of life and the commands of our King if you limit your reading to what is offered in the Canadian newspapers and magazines?"

No, he wasn't pushing CC; he was encouraging people to buy more good books.

CC of Oct. 18, 1957 trumpets in its headlines: "Our petition has been granted!" CC had written about the second class citizenship of naturalized citizens. If you were a naturalized citizen of Canada, your citizenship could be revoked under certain conditions, while it would not be for a natural born citizen. A petition was sent to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, who acted on it.

The editor of CC takes a little bow, but he gives the real credit to the prayers of the people.

## Nieuwe Kerk te Oshawa





## History

## Covenant boundaries and blessings

It is the 100th Anniversary of the Christian Reformed Church in Canada, and I want to draw your attention to a little known but important chronicle of this history. Let me first remind you of how absolutely remarkable this story is. If one looks at Dutch immigrant life in Canada from the outside, its history since World War II appears as a fascinating cultural movement. It was expected by most government officials that hard-working white farmers like the Dutch would easily integrate into mainstream Canadian society. But these immigrants did the exact opposite of assimilation: they rejected Canadian traditions, values and social institutions and established their own parallel culture, complete with competing churches, schools, unions, and political and economic networks.

Mike Fallon, now CR Campus Minister at McMaster University, finished a doctoral thesis in history at the University of Guelph entitled *People of the Covenant: Dutch Reformed Immigration into Canada After World War II* (2000). The main question his thesis deals with is this: "Why has this segment of the supposedly 'grateful Dutch' responded to immigration by creating a counter-culture which questions some of the fundamental principles of Canadian society?" (7)

Fallon's argument is that while much credit is given to the intellectual and theological fervor of Kuyperianism, more attention needs to be paid to the role of covenant theology. The emphasis on God's covenant with his people is not only a significant variable in the formation of this counterculture, but it is also a wide umbrella. It is what enabled pre-War and post-War, Canadian and U.S., as well as Kuyperian and pietist strands of the Reformed community to co-operate despite other differences.

## Set apart from the Canaanites

Covenant history became a "farmer's almanac of analogies which [the Reformed] could access for guidance in their own immigrant experience." (23) For example, "the wartime occupation of the Netherlands by the Germans was seen as analogous to the enslavement of Israel by the Egyptians; after throwing off the yoke of slavery, the Israelites begin their Exodus. The food drops by

the allies are compared to the biblical manna falling from the sky. The Atlantic Ocean becomes the Red Sea or the Jordan River, and Canada becomes Canaan, the 'land of milk and honey.' In most cases, the message from the pulpit was clear: liberation, a safe voyage, future prosperity and blessings are to be seen as signs of a Covenant God's faithfulness. All the Reformed had to do was keep their side of the covenant." (143) This suggests, of course, that Canadians were the equivalent of the pagan Canaanites.

In Fallon's interviews with numerous immigrants this analogy was very directly described. Interviewees spoke of how the early community perceived of itself as "the true church," "the chosen people" or the "remnant." "Their doctrine and history," summarizes Fallon, "— all that they held dear — told them their religious beliefs were superior to those of the inhabitants of the land... many people stated that they thought a real biblical Christianity did not exist in Canada until their arrival." (172)

Putting it differently, he explains that "there was a certain exclusiveness to all Christian Reformed communities simply because they believed their church was truer than the Canadian churches. For the generous of spirit, this did not mean some of the others were not true, but in general, most Christian Reformed people would feel that they were the truest." (285)

Some people may point out that most immigrant groups "keep to themselves" when they first arrive in a new country. "The surprising component here," says Fallon, "is the degree to which these white Northern Europeans have remained separate from the people around them after a half a century." (297)

## The 100 year shift

As a historian, Fallon comments only briefly on the current state of the community, saying "the covenantal Reformed mindset of the earlier immigration period is no longer functioning along the strict isolationist and separatist lines of the earlier patterns." But he insists that it was significant historically, because, more so than the intellectual Kuyperianism, "their covenantal relationship with God and each other spoke to their emotional, intellectual and spiritual

## Eternal Student

Peter Schuurman



needs. This relationship provided them with a firm foundation from which to view a strange, new land. It gave them purpose and direction, providing them with a comprehensive guide in their struggle to adjust to life in a new environment." (382)

Fallon's thesis brings together history and theology in a unique and accessible way, describing everything from redemptive history, World War II experiences, immigration, and the various church debates and schisms and the denominations that were subsequently formed from them. This adds another narrative voice to the folk histories and other ethnic histories that have been written (which he also examines). His focus, however, covers only the last fifty years of the CRC's history in Canada, as World War II provided a massive shift in the size and direction of the denomination, and a logical starting point for a new chapter.

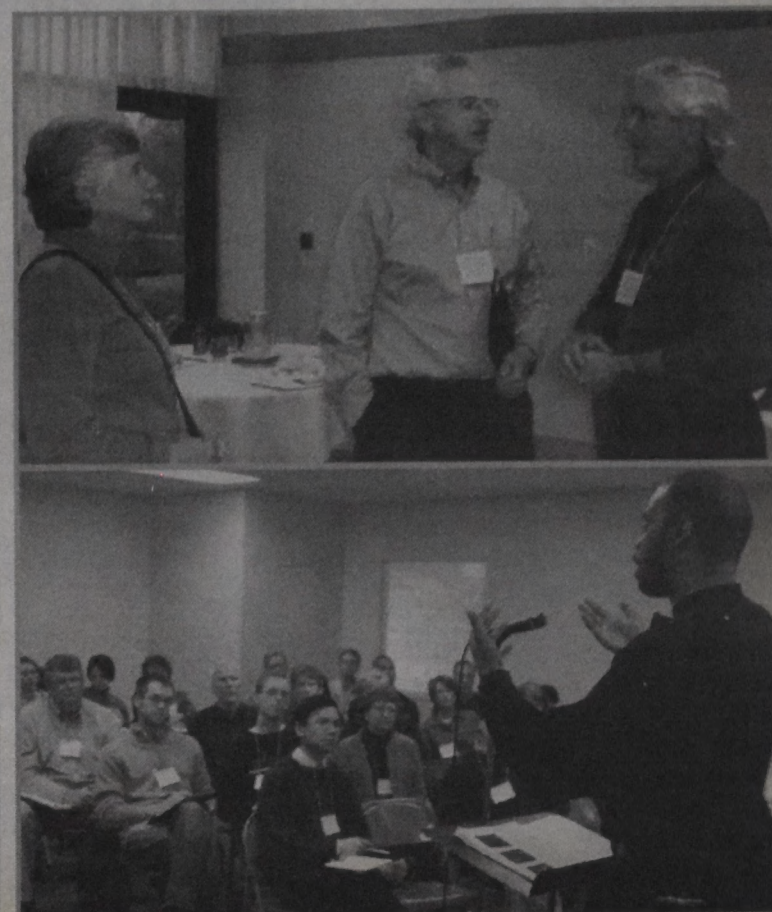
Now at 100, there is opportunity for another shift, one that makes the covenantal boundaries more porous. I don't think we want to subtract the comfort and hope that covenantal theology brings. Covenant is our trust relationship with God, his promises and call on our life. If Fallon is right, this may be one of the main threads that holds different Reformed types together (what some call the culture engagers, confessionalists, and evangelicals).

Covenant, however, was intended by God for more than local benefit. Its purpose from the start was to bring new life to the whole world. What if we were to celebrate more enthusiastically the covenantal promise that God's people would be a blessing to all the nations?

The anniversary bicycle tour this summer embraces Canada in a wonderfully playful way. It is an effort to celebrate and to give thanks for the gift of this vast land, its people, and our ministry within it. The tour ends at Pier 21, Halifax harbour, the place where it all began.

Could Pier 21 be a symbol of the future as well as the past? A place where "all nations" come, looking for new life? Canada is a nation of immigrants, and if we can welcome others as we would like to be welcomed, we may be more fully the covenant people God wants us to be.

*Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Education Mission Leader and resides in Guelph, Ontario.*



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## Church

# Islamic court acquits Iranian Christian

Barbara G. Baker

ISTANBUL (Compass) — An Islamic court in southern Iran acquitted Christian lay pastor on charges of apostasy and proselytizing two days ago, declaring, "Under sharia (Islamic law), there are no charges against you."

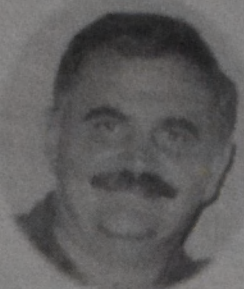
During a May 28 court hearing in Bandar-i Bushehr, Pourmand's judge reportedly told him, "I don't know who you are, but apparently the rest of the world does. You must be an important person, because many people from the government have called me, saying to cancel your case."

But instead of dropping the charges, the judge declared he was acquitting Pourmand, a former Muslim who converted to Christianity 25 years ago, because he had "done nothing wrong" according to Islamic law.

Pourmand's surprise acquittal in a single hearing was reported yesterday by the Farsi-language ISNA news agency, quoting the jailed Christian's lawyer as its source. "Since then, the news of Hamid's acquittal has appeared on many well-known Farsi websites," an Iranian Christian confirmed to

Compass today.

Even so, the acquitted pastor remains imprisoned, serving out a three-year jail sentence for a separate military court conviction also linked to his religious conversion.



Hamid Pourmand

Pourmand, 47, was arrested last September by the Iranian security police while attending a church conference near Tehran. An army colonel, he was also serving as lay pastor for an Assemblies of God congregation in the southern port city of Bandar-i Bushehr.

After five months of interrogation in strict solitary confinement, Pourmand was arraigned in February before a military court, accused of "deceiving the Iranian armed forces" by not reporting his conversion to Christianity. Despite

clear-cut evidence to the contrary, he was ruled guilty, dishonorably discharged and handed down the maximum three-year prison sentence for his "crime."

After spending the next two months in a group cell at Tehran's Evin Prison, Pourmand was transferred on May 16 to a prison in Bandar-i Bushehr to stand trial before an Islamic court on separate apostasy and proselytizing charges.

For the past nine months, the lay pastor has been subjected to repeated pressures to recant his Christian faith and return to Islam in order to escape execution for apostasy, as required under the theocratic laws of Iran.

Pourmand's lawyer has appealed the military court conviction on the basis of written documents signed by the former army colonel's superiors, proving that they knew he had become a Christian. The military tribunal which convicted Pourmand in February had rejected the documents as falsified.

Sources close to the case admit there is little assurance that Pourmand's military conviction would be overturned by Iran's

Supreme Court. But they expressed hope that his sentence might be reduced to one year or less. "He has been under arrest for more than nine months already," one Iranian Christian observed, "so if his sentence is reduced, he could be released very soon."

Commenting on his two weeks of confinement in Bandar-i Bushehr, Pourmand reportedly confirmed he had been jailed there with common criminals, including gangsters, murderers and drug dealers. "But now I'm back with the so-called 'spies' at Evin," he joked after arriving back in Tehran yesterday.

Since February, the lay pastor had shared a group cell with journalist Akbar Ganji and other prominent political dissidents jailed at Evin Prison for expressing their pro-reform views. The U.S. administration and European governments have urged Tehran repeatedly to set free the journalist and other known prisoners of conscience, including Pourmand.

Over the weekend, unprecedented protests continued in front

of the Iranian Parliament building, where students and civic leaders staged sit-ins and raised placards and banners demanding the release of Ganji, now seriously ill after five years in prison. Ten days into a hunger strike, Ganji today yielded to the advice of his lawyer, Nobel peace prize laureate Shirin Edabi, accepting emergency medical leave from prison to receive hospital treatment.

"We don't know what will happen about Pourmand in the next few weeks," one Iranian source told Compass today. "But we have absolute proof of his innocence, and there are very strong international pressures right now, as we are close to electing a new president."

Surrounded by police yesterday as he was escorted into Evin Prison, Pourmand smiled and waved to his family, saying, "Don't worry about me. This prison is like my home now, you know!"

Pourmand and his wife Arlet, who is an Assyrian Christian, have two teenage sons, Immanuel and David.

## Two bombs kill Christians in Tentena, Indonesia

Sarah Page

DUBLIN (Compass) — Two bombs, timed to inflict the greatest possible damage, exploded in a refugee village for Christians in Tentena, Indonesia, on Saturday morning, killing 21 people and injuring 49.

The first bomb exploded at around 8:15 a.m., May 28, in the crowded morning market. As friends and family members came running to assist the injured, a second bomb exploded near the market entrance.

Tentena is located in Poso district, Central Sulawesi. Since the late 1990s, Muslim and Christian communities there and in Northern Sulawesi have experienced periods of extreme violence followed by an uneasy peace. Over 1,000 people perished in the conflict before the Malino I Peace Accord was signed in December 2001. Observers believe the latest attack could stir up renewed fighting in the province.

One local source reported that the telephone service in Tentena was cut off immediately after the explosions. "This made the situation even worse, as the telephone service, provided by the government telephone company, is the only means of communication."

"Also, there are only two ambulances in the town of Tentena, and with the number of people in need of immediate treatment, this caused even more stress in an already panicked situation."

The Rev. Rinaldy Damanik also lives in Tentena. A week before the explosion, he spoke with visitors about the current situation in Sulawesi and said he was optimistic about the future. However, the twin

explosions over the weekend will almost certainly provide a setback for the reconciliation process between communities whose divisions run deep.

Another source in Tentena commented, "Many believe this terrorist act is linked to the election for the Bupati or district head of Poso." Poso has been predominantly Christian since the district was divided into two parts, but many Muslims object to the division.

The bombing may also be linked to an earlier attack in West Sulawesi on April 24. According to a report in the Jakarta Post, the attack on Ranu sub-district in the predominantly Christian regency of Mamasa that left four people dead, led to the capture of a suspect named Amirrudin, 22.

Following his arrest, Amirrudin admitted to being part of a five-man terrorist commando unit that carried out the attack.

General Saleh Saaf, chief police inspector for South Sulawesi, said documents found in Amirrudin's possession revealed a wider plot to carry out terror attacks across the country. The documents contained instructions for making homemade bombs and other coded information which police plan to investigate further.

Within days of the April 24 attack, two other bombs were set off in Poso, Central Sulawesi. By May 3, police had arrested three Muslims in connection with the Poso explosions.

According to an ABC Radio Australia report on May 3, the three suspects told police that their mission was to wage a jihad or holy war in the province, to highlight the plight of Muslims worldwide.

## Indian churches question reprieve for killer of Baptist missionary

Anto Akkara

Thrissur, India (ENI) — Church leaders in India on Friday expressed concern after a court reduced the death sentence on the killer of an Australian missionary to life imprisonment and ordered the acquittal of 11 others previously convicted for involvement in the murder.

"We are really concerned about this judgement. It gives a wrong signal," said Bishop B. K. Sahu, general secretary of the National Council of Churches in India, which groups 29 Orthodox and Protestant Churches, after the court judgement announced on May 19.

Dara Singh had been sentenced to death in 2003 for the murder of the Baptist missionary, Graham Staines, and his two sons Philip and Timothy, who were burned to death in January 1999 as they slept in a van in Manoharpur, a remote village in the Indian state of Orissa.

Singh was said to be a Hindu fundamentalist who had accused Staines of converting people living in an isolated area, who are known locally as tribal people.

The high court of eastern Orissa state, which reduced Singh's sentence, also acquitted 11 of the 12 fellow-accused who had been sentenced to life imprisonment in the original trial.

Baptist pastor P. R. Parichcha, president of the Orissa chapter of the All India Christian Council, said the verdict "increases our feeling of insecurity".

Meanwhile, John Dayal, president of the All India Catholic Union, a lay forum, said, "The judgement also sends out a wrong signal at this juncture when the country is trying to get out of the mess of communal hatred and communal crimes."

Graham Staines' wife, Gladys, has said she has forgiven the killers of her husband.

John Staines, Graham Staines' brother, told the Reuters news agency: "I didn't want to see Dara Singh executed. As far as the others being acquitted, there is one true judge and that is God."



Gladys Staines



## Church

### Anglicans and Catholics frame accord on role of the Virgin Mary

**Cedric Pulford**

London (ENI) – A five-year study by Roman Catholic and Anglican scholars into the place of the Virgin Mary in Christian doctrine has tried to reconcile one of the main differences that have traditionally divided Catholics and Protestants.

The Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) declared that prayers to Mary, the mother of Jesus, do not conflict with Christ's unique mediation with God the Father.

"We do not consider the practice of asking Mary and the saints to pray for us as communion dividing.... We believe that there is no continuing theological reason for ecclesial division on these matters," said the report, titled "Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ".

Prayers to Mary and the saints – rather than directly to Christ – were rejected by the Protestant reformers of the 16th century, who claimed the practice was idolatrous.

"Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ" was launched in the U.S. city of Seattle on May 16, and is also known as the Seattle Statement. It addresses two Catholic dogmas about Mary, the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption, which it says, "have been seen as points which have separated Anglican and Catholic Churches". It states that neither is contrary to scripture.

The Immaculate Conception is the belief that was pronounced Catholic dogma in 1854

that Mary from the moment of her conception was free from sin. The Assumption refers to the belief, defined as an article of faith in 1950, that Mary was assumed – or taken up – body and soul into heaven without dying.

Vatican official Bishop Brian Farrell of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has said the statement on Mary is a "very important step forward".

"Mary: Grace and Hope in Christ" is one of a series of studies from ARCIC, the official instrument of theological dialogue between the Catholic Church and the churches of the Anglican Communion. However, the discussion document does not carry the authority of the two churches.

It drew an immediate response from Reform, representing the evangelical wing of the (Anglican) Church of England.

"Prayer to Mary goes completely against the grain of Jesus Christ being our great high priest who intercedes on our behalf with the Father. Theological fudge can never be a basis for moving forward in unity," Reform spokesperson Rod Thomas told Ecumenical News International.

He said, "ARCIC has resorted to contorted use of scripture in an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable. A better way is to move forward locally, where there is a great deal of cooperation between the Christian churches and where such debates are viewed as extremely arcane."

### Christian aid groups nervous about food aid to Zimbabwe

**Trevor Grundy**

Canterbury, England (ENI) – Christian emergency response groups in Britain are concerned that food supplies sent to Zimbabweans will be used for supporters of President Robert Mugabe's ruling ZANU-PF party rather than going to more than five million people whom international aid agencies say face the prospect of starvation later this year.

"We're concerned about the situation in Zimbabwe," said Christian Aid's John McGhie in London. "But we don't want to say anything or do anything that might endanger our people on the ground out there."

Richard Bunting, a spokesperson for the Disasters Emergency Committee, an umbrella for some of Britain's biggest agencies including Christian Aid, Oxfam, Save the Children and the British Red Cross said, "This is a subject that's concerning all of the major aid agencies and human rights watchdogs."

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says: "Zimbabwe is enduring the country's worst humanitarian situation since independence a quarter of a

century ago. The origins of Zimbabwe's crisis are as complex and multifaceted as they are damaging."

Upwards of five million Zimbabweans face starvation this year, say Roman Catholic Church sources in Bulawayo. Zimbabwe would need to import at least 1.5 million tons of maize (corn) from South Africa and three countries that Zimbabwe used to help during emergencies until recently – Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

A senior church source said in Harare: "Green Bombers [the armed youth wing of the ruling party] stop any large supplies of maize [more than 10 kilograms] going to many rural areas. They confiscate it. We fear for the safety

of Christian Aid and other workers."

Last week church sources said Zimbabwe's Registrar General Tobaiwa Mudede sum-moned two Christian missionaries from their home in Harare following reports the pair had provided food to people queuing at the passport office who were making plans to leave the country.

Zimbabwe's children are hungry



### My journey with refugees

**Sonya VanderVeen Feddema**

"The family is coming on Tuesday," the voice on the other end of the line informed me.

My heart raced. Tuesday? It was already Thursday night! How could the Refugee Committee at Covenant Christian Reformed Church in St. Catharines, of which I was a member, prepare for their arrival in a matter of days?

Three years earlier the Refugee Committee was established in preparation for the arrival of eight people our church had sponsored. At that time we had no idea of how differently things would turn out than we had envisioned.

At that time, in preparation for the group's arrival, we had looked into some housing options, but had made no firm plans because of the uncertainty of the arrival date. Also, we had filled a garage with furnishings and household goods donated by members of our church. A year passed, and the refugees still had not come. So, we decided to donate the collected articles to needy refugees already living in our city, agreeing that we would trust God to provide for our refugees' needs when they arrived.

That Thursday night, to our surprise, we heard that the group of eight people was not coming. Instead, we would be taking in a widow and her three children.

I hardly slept that night. My thoughts churned as my anxiety mounted. We had no home or furnishings for the family!

I prayed. Other committee members prayed. And we remembered what we had agreed upon when we gave all the collected furnishings away. We would trust God to provide.

As we attempted to be obedient to his command to offer hospitality to those in need, he did provide in amazing ways! We experienced what Christine Pohl says in *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition*: "Many stories of hospitality contain elements of mystery and surprise because God is so often present in unexpected ways" (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999, pp. 23).

That Sunday morning I spoke to our congregation and updated them on the situation. I described how, since I had heard the news, God had been speaking to me through the lesson based on 2 Kings 4:1-7 that our Coffee Break women's Bible study group would be studying the next week. The passage is about Elisha and the impoverished widow, who faced the imminent loss of her sons to slavery at the hands of her creditors.

"By God's power, Elisha performed a miracle there," I told my church family. "But the widow also participated in the miracle by taking a step of faith. She was told to go to all her neighbors for empty

jars, and she was specifically told not to ask for just a few jars. She was instructed to pour the little oil she owned into the jars. She obeyed. And God filled all her jars! As a Refugee Committee, we are stepping out in faith. We are coming to you, our neighbors, and asking for your jars – your household goods – so that we can set up a household soon for our arriving widow and her three children."

By Sunday afternoon the committee had found a home for the family. By Monday night we had enough – no, more than enough! – furnishings, and moved everything into the house. When we picked the family up from the airport on Tuesday afternoon, they were able to move into their new home.

What I experienced in those initial days on my journey with the refugees has sustained me through the challenging, yet rewarding work of settling a family in a new land. I've learned so much as I've walked this uncharted path. Allow me to share some of what I've discovered.

First, offering hospitality to refugees and others who have been oppressed, displaced, and victimized is a sacred task. Author Christine Pohl, mentioned earlier, says, "Acts of hospitality participate in and reflect God's greater hospitality and therefore hold some connection to the divine, to holy ground" (pp. 13).

I believe that because it is a sacred task, God blesses the obedience of his people when they offer hospitality. As I just mentioned, he does so by providing all that is needed in terms of material things. But he supplies in other significant ways as well. When we formed our committee three years before the refugees arrived, we had no idea what skills would be needed to accomplish the work. I have seen how God directed the make-up of our committee. One person was proficient in filling out forms – many forms needed to be filled in upon the refugees' arrival! – and in taking the family to various government offices. Two others were enthusiastic and competent shoppers, able to teach the family where and how to shop in Canada. Others on the committee were handy with household repairs. Another was knowledgeable in budgeting and finances. The list goes on – providing for transportation needs, offering information on schools for the children and the mother, showing them the city library, and so on.

Not only did God provide the skills needed, he also supplied the spiritual gifts so necessary to the healthy functioning of the Refugee Committee. He used us to encourage each other when the work became difficult, and he strengthened us to speak words of God's faithfulness to each other when new challenges arose. In the process, we grew in love and respect

*Continued on page 15...*



## Celebration

## Dordt's jubilee: celebrating a gift from many hands

## Hary der Nederlanden

Recently a traveling troupe of Dordt students visited our area to stage a dramatic piece that combined music, song, drama and film to recall the history of Dordt College and set forth the vision of the school. They visited many different cities and towns in Canada and the U.S. this year because it is the school's Jubilee. Dordt College received its first class 55 years ago.

My wife and I are both Dordt alumni, so the drama staged by the students stirred a lot of memories. The theme and strategy of the drama addressed the fact that the key concepts expressing Dordt's neo-Kuyperian worldview have become clichés that make our eyes glaze over and our minds seize up like oil-starved engines. New life was breathed into those ossified words with dialogue, song, personal testimony and with segments of film. The latter showed very concretely how those ideas had changed the lives of specific graduates, who in turn were changing the world around them.

When I arrived at Dordt in the fall of 1962, those ideas were not yet clichés. Far from it. They were sparks just flaring up in our imaginations.

Dordt, launched as a 2-year college, became a 4-year college about the time the first wave of kids from the great Dutch post-war immigration to Canada was reaching college age. Although located amidst the corn fields of Iowa, the school began attracting ever larger numbers of Canadians, particularly from western Canada, beginning in the early 1960s. It became deeply entwined in the lives of many Canadian kids, and so also in the life of the Canadian CRC. It educated quite a number of our teachers and preachers. It helped us to grow. But we also helped it to grow.

Dordt helped to weave together the solid piety of the midwest CRCers in America with the more aggressive spirituality of the neo-Kuyperians in Canada. It also wove us together in more down to earth ways. Like many other Canadians, when I left Dordt, I not only had an education, I had something much more precious – a good wife of solid Iowa stock. Believe me, a good wife is worth infinitely more than a B.A. or even a Phd.

It didn't take the Dordt faculty long to catch on that they needed



Dordt drama troupe performing

to cultivate the neo-Kuyperian vision of Christian scholarship that the Canadian students were excited about. When we arrived in the early 60s, however, Dordt was still in its infancy. On my very first day of classes, my speech teacher began describing the evolution of human speech as beginning with grunts and gestures. Although shy, I immediately blurted out, "But when I open my Bible, I read that Adam and Eve talked to God and to each other."

The young professor (it was his first year of teaching) looked as if he'd been hit with a two-by-four. After stammering something, he skipped the introduction he'd planned and launched into the practical stuff. When I got to know him better, I learned that he was not at all an evolutionist; on the contrary, his view of origins was quite fundamentalist. However, he'd uncritically absorbed that bit about the evolution of human speech from grunts in language courses he'd taken at a secular grad school. His theology and his theory of language had been kept in separate compartments in his head, and he had never brought the two together to see that they didn't mesh.

His was an extreme instance, of course. But he did to some degree typify the prevailing mode of Christian education not just at Dordt but at many church-related colleges in America, according to scholars like Robert Benne in his book *Quality with Soul*. That incident and others prompted me to write an over-the-top indictment of education at Dordt in the school paper. It was called "The dichotomized student" and accused Dordt of passing off secular education by

wrapping it in the sacred veils of chapel and opening prayer. It was a gross exaggeration, of course, but it stirred up a little dust.

At the second meeting of Dordt's pre-sem club (yes, I was one of the many who began as a presem student), I gave a rather long and tendentious review of Hendrik van Riessen's *Society of the Future*, which I had read the previous summer. President B.J. Haan, sponsor of the club, was hugely enthusiastic about the book (he was often enthusiastic) and immediately asked to borrow it. "That's just the kind of thing we need around here!" he exclaimed when he returned it, slapping me on the back. It earned me more than one invitation to supper, I believe.

Like many a naive young man from an ordinary family, I came to college expecting to encounter brilliant, erudite professors, intellectual giants, deep thinkers like some of the authors I'd begun reading in high school. When I found that most professors weren't very different from my high school teachers – and I had some excellent high school teachers – I confess I was somewhat disillusioned. In my last year of high school, I'd heard Van Riessen and Runner speak in a church in downtown Edmonton, and I sort of expected my teachers at Dordt to provide similar intellectual fireworks on a regular basis. A rather unrealistic demand, I slowly began to realize, as most Dordt professors were forced to spread themselves very, very thin.

The first year, for example, I took history with Prof. Nick van Til. Besides history, Van Til taught philosophy, political science, logic,

music and a couple of other subjects. He didn't have much time for golf. After having tried my own hand at college teaching, I realize that most of those professors worked like sled dogs in those early years. They probably still do.

But we students, especially the Canadian contingent, were very demanding, impatient and unforgiving. Perhaps it was in the air in the 60s, but we were infused with a sense of infinite possibilities. We had visions and thought the world to be malleable as clay. We were also disappointed by how similar the content of our courses was to that offered at any secular university. Those of us who had learned something of the antithesis from our parents expected a bigger difference. So we made life uncomfortable for our overworked professors.

Now, a mere 50 years later, those visionary ideas we had yet to articulate have already become clichés that need new life breathed into them.

As my professors struggled to make Dordt what it was called to be, I developed a deep respect and love for the many teachers I encountered there. Over the years, the school has grown tremendously, in size (when I arrived the entire student body was smaller than my high school graduating class), in depth and in its course offerings (well over 90 percent of Dordt students in the early 60s planned to become either teachers or preachers or married to one).

Looking back now, I realize that I was shaped as much by non-academic dimensions of my time at Dordt as by my studies. The school tossed together immigrant Canadians with third and fourth generation Americans from the midwest, flaky Californians fixated on Barry Godwater, liberals from New Jersey, a few southerners who thought Martin Luther King was a communist, and a few non-CRC students who were even more conservative than the locals.

Sioux Center wasn't only dry in those days, there was no movie theater either, and we were warned against movie attendance. One of the discussions in Presem Club suggested that going to movies was a violation of your confession of faith. Canadian kids were considered a bit on the loose side: the girls smoked and we all went

to movies.

I was condemned to conservatism by reason of finances. I couldn't afford a car, a movie ticket or cigarettes, and I hated beer. So I was the very model of a good CRC boy. I only went to the movies in the Dordt gym. Admission was 25 cents. At that rate, you could even afford a date, but working up the courage to ask a girl always took me so long by that time she was already going steady with some other guy.

Us Canadian boys got along quite well with the Iowa girls. They had cars, and they'd pick us up to show us the local sights – the grain elevators, Orange City, Sandy Hollow – or just to tear around. Those Iowa kids did a lot of tearing around in their old cars.

I fell in love with the Addink sisters – both of them – because they gave us so many rides in their 1950 Hudson. Invariably there were car chases. Without seat belts, you'd be tossed from one side of the car to the other as the car squealed around corners and bounced across intersections.

Some of my best memories of my college days are the evening we spent at the Addinks. Although they were already a large family, on Sunday evenings they often invited a large number of Dordt students to join them and we'd play all sort of silly games. Mr. Addink taught me how to let myself topple forward rigid as a board and catch myself at the last second on my fingertips.

One day on my way to school as I was passing by the Pontiac dealership on the corner of second and main, I spotted a 1950 Pontiac parked behind the shop. It was a big car with a long hood, a sun visor, and the deepest, most beautiful shade of green I've ever seen. The upholstery inside, a grey-brown velour, was like new. As I straightened up from peering in the windows, I discovered a short, stocky man standing beside me.

"She's a beauty, isn't she?" he said, stroking the hood as if it were a horse.

We talked a little. He found out that my family had never owned an automobile and that I didn't even have a driver's license; in fact, I didn't know how to drive. He could hardly believe his ears. Iowa farm boys learned to drive even before they were weaned.

The car didn't have an engine in it; it had blown up. But for \$250



## Spirituality



Harry in the Dordt library

the man said he'd get it up and running for me.

"Sit in it," he said. And I did. "Look, it has hydramatic transmission – one of the first automatics." Yes, it did.

But I didn't have \$250, so I continued on to school.

A couple of days later, I paused to admire the car again, and the man was out there like a shot. By the time I was on my way again, he had dropped the price to \$200.

The next time I was passing, he intercepted me and dropped his offer even lower.

Eventually he almost made me buy that car. I got it for \$135. One of his mechanics, who was related to my landlord, told me that it cost him a lot more than that to get the car running.

"He just wanted you to have that car," he told me.

Not having driven before, I put a dent in it the first day.

In those days, being a Dordt student also meant becoming part of the local community. That, too, became part of my classroom. Once I was out of money and needed a loan. When I went to the local bank, I was ushered into the president's office. After hearing me out, Mr. TePaske gave me the loan, and when I paid it back three months later, he didn't charge a cent of interest.

The local doctor had to straighten my nose once. It had been moved over a couple of inches to the left one day, and it took the doctor quite a bit of wrestling to get it back in place. In fact, the first time he tried, I slid right off the end of the steel operating table.

"You have to hold on tight," he said. I did and I emerged with a much straighter nose. When I stopped by his office a couple of months later to pay him, there was no charge.

Of course, the local farmers knew a good source of labor

when they saw it. Often they'd call the school and ask whether one of them Canadian fellows wanted a few hours work. I mucked out a few cow barns during my years at Dordt. One such occasion, I recall doing more talking than working. The farmer was full of questions

about Canada and the Dutch immigrants up there. He hired me less as a source of labor power than as a source of information.

Canadians boys were often eager to put in a few hours of work for a local farmer – especially in the late afternoon. Invariably it involved an invitation to stay for supper. The first time I was invited for supper, the size of the steak that was dropped on my plate almost rendered me speechless. Back home the entire family would have shared that steak on Sunday – and there would have been leftovers for Monday. When I got back to my room, I must have described the size of that steak to my fellow Canadians more than a dozen times. At last they had to tell me to shut up.

I admit, it took us awhile to get used to the diet at the Dordt cafeteria. Some things they served up none of us Canadians could stomach. The American kids, however, seemed to think it was edible. They didn't always have appetizing names for it, though. One dish was called "shit on a shingle." Canadians were used to a lot of potatoes and vegetables, and our bodies took awhile to adjust to the American diet, often groaning for some home cooking about 9 o'clock at night.

One of the favorite noon menu items for all us guys was toasted cheese sandwiches. We used them to fill up the empty spaces that were left after other meals. Sometimes we'd wolf down as many as a dozen toasted cheese sandwiches. The kitchen ladies thought that a bit excessive and suddenly imposed a limit: no more than six toasted cheese sandwiches per person.

That didn't sit too well with us. Some of the guys got around the limit by having their girlfriends take the full ration even though they only wanted a couple. Then they'd sneak the remainder to their fella. But not all of us had girls to

## The best we can do

I remember my mother staring out the window one spring morning after my father had died. She let out a deep sigh and said, "When I see all the work out there I literally feel sick to my stomach."

I stood beside her with my arm around her shoulders. "It'll be okay," I told her. "Between the two of us we'll get through. We'll just do the best we can."

She didn't look at me as she answered, "I'm not sure that will be enough."

It seemed such an odd thing to say. What more could be required than the best we could do? And how could she not be glad to see spring?

It was a busy season. We had a big house, a big yard, and my father had been an avid gardener. But we managed. We shared the household tasks. I kept the lawn cut. Mom tended the flowerbeds. On evenings and weekends that May and June I painted the exterior of the house. When something cropped up that we couldn't handle, my brother was only a phone call away.

I had a lot of energy, and didn't mind doing my part, but the one thing I noticed was that the work never ended. I'd cut the grass on Monday night, and by Thursday it needed to be done again. In the fall the grass cutting slowed down, but there were leaves to rake and the garden needed to be cleaned out and closed up for the winter. When the snow fell, somebody had to go out there and shovel it away.

Meanwhile, we were both working at full time jobs. She managed to keep the house until after I got married and moved to Harriston. Then it just made sense for her to find something smaller.

That was nearly thirty years ago. In the meantime I've come to view work as a gift from God, but also as something that can become a god itself, if not kept in perspective. I still love springtime, but some days I feel like my mom did all those years ago. I look around at the yard – the grass and the pool getting greener every day, the spring cleaning, the painting and maintenance that need to be done. On the farm spring means tax returns, annual financial reports, land work for Jack, stone picking, plus all the day-to-day work that knows no particular season.

I try to break it down into daily and weekly goals,

smuggle for us.

It was the beginning of the 60s – the era of demonstrations, so we did what many students did in those days – we staged a sit-in. It was all done in good spirits, exchanging jokes with the cooks and servers, but we planted ourselves on the counters, and there we stayed. After a bit, Mr. Boertje, in charge of finances, arrived to negotiate with us. Grinning cheerfully, he listened to our gripes, and then explained that we were breaking the budget with our insatiable appetite for cheese sandwiches. But after we cried a lot and grovelled on the floor, he relented, and the cheese sandwich ceiling was lifted. A huge

crisis was averted that day.

It happened only a week or so before Thanksgiving. A few of the fellows had been quite militant in the protest. Reflecting on the event, I saw the irony of it. I drew a cartoon of angry, picketing students burning down the dining hall in the great cheese sandwich riot. In the foreground, I drew a gloating turkey who was saying to himself, "Thank God for cheese sandwiches."

The administration didn't seem to catch on that I was commenting on our own lack of thankfulness so close to thanksgiving. Someone decided the paper ought to be censored. But it was too late. Most of

## Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke

and then I feel as if I can accomplish something. But as the weeks pass by and it seems nothing gets done, it's easy to become frustrated and overwhelmed by the "to-do" list that just won't quit.

I see Jack watching every weather forecast, getting up early to get the machinery ready, the fields worked and the crops planted. It seems the extended daylight hours only mean he will work longer in a 24 hour period. But farmers aren't the only ones who suffer from this particular brand of spring fever.

My children are all putting in long days at work and/or studying, trying to do just a little better and "get on top of things." My closest friend pours her heart and soul into her work, and yet at the end of a day often feels she should have done more and done it better. The more we scurry, the more elusive getting "done" becomes.

I woke up yesterday morning at 4:45, thinking of all the busy people in my life and the challenges they're facing. My own relentless agenda was bouncing around my brain, making it impossible to sleep. Then I heard the birds in the maple tree break into song – not just a couple of robins – but a whole choir of birds to greet the day.

I lay there in the predawn light and listened to them praising God as they were designed to do. The sun hadn't yet risen, but they were giving thanks for the day ahead.

When the sun came up I wandered into the kitchen and plugged in the coffee pot. I sat in the living room and thought about my mom. These days she complains to me about the endless, boring days in the nursing home. Her eyes are nearly blind, her hands arthritic and her mind confused. She often ends her lament with, "Oh well, what can you do?" To which I automatically respond, "The best you can, Ma ... the best you can."

And as I sat in prayer in the morning light I realized the best I can do is to put my trust in God. I can be faithful in the small things he sends me, and thankful that the big picture is in his hands. And above all else I need to remember – no matter how imperfect my efforts may be, he only ever does the best.

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the students already had a copy; the paper was just prevented from circulating off campus.

It's one of my proudest memories – to be responsible for nearly getting the student paper censored was a badge of honor in those days. After that, a staff person was appointed to inspect the paper before it went into print.

But let me tell you about the time....

That's how it is with reminiscences, isn't it? Once you get started, you can go on and on. You're amazed by how much you remember.

Everyone has stories, not just  
*Continued on page 14...*



## Remembrance

## Hunger winter: the German checkpoint at Amersfoort

*In the last chapter, after spending the first night on the road apart from his family, sleeping in a barn, Sietze Jongsma, Ankje his wife and their three children at last are given a place to sleep by a Christian couple, who also share their food with them. HdN*

The next morning we arose early, for we had to get back on the road. Coming downstairs, we were again greeted by a table set with plenty of food, and soon the entire family was again sitting around the table where we were richly strengthened.

Although nothing was said, we were filled with gratitude as we saw that the lady of the house was preparing sandwiches for us to take along on our journey. When the time came for us to be on our way, we were loaded down with food. It was hard for us to say goodbye. In our hearts we grieved that there were so few people in the world like these, and we left with a certain heaviness of heart.

It was still quite early in the morning, but the weather was good – overcast but not cold. We set out with new courage. If at all possible we hoped to reach De Bilt that day, a distance of about 26 km. Since the old road to Utrecht was safer, having fewer German check points and fewer attacks from the air, we decided to take this road.

We had not traveled far, however, before Ankje began complaining about pain in her feet. To ease the pain, she took off her shoes and walked in her stocking feet. Obviously, we could not go far like this, and we were only at the beginning of our journey. After applying some band-aids, she put her shoes back on and tried again.

As on the previous days, today the roads were again busy with dozens of people pushing and pulling all sorts of primitive conveyances to pick up food from farmers. Among them were four boys about 13 years old with a handcart that they had pushed all the way from The Hague. They were on their way to Drente.

We met many other kids like them on the way, but everyone had his own worries and suffering, so there was little pity for one another. The human heart became hardened and one almost began to consider the circumstances as normal.

We also kept seeing wagons loaded with the household goods of people who were forced to evacuate.

Around noon we came to the town of Harmelen, where we stopped at an old fashioned café to eat some of our sandwiches and have a cup of coffee.

After being refreshed we continued on, continually passing through small towns, which made the time pass more pleasantly.

When we reached the city of Utrecht, it was already 3:30 in the afternoon. To find your way in a strange city is always difficult, and finding the shortest way is even more difficult. Fortunately we encountered many helpful, friendly people. A helpful

police officer showed us the shortest way to De Bilt.

By the time we reached the outskirts of the city, daylight was already waning. We too were showing signs of physical and mental weariness. Good friends in The Hague had, however, given us an address in De Bilt where we could stay over night. After our experiences of the previous night, we no longer wanted to take any chances, so we pressed on.

We had plenty of company on the road. Apparently it was quitting time for office workers and many people were on their way home.

However, we found that we could not make the distance to De Bilt in one stretch, and although it was mid-winter we sat down on a bench along the road to rest and have another sandwich.

By the time we reached the beautiful town of De Bilt, it was almost dark, but we quickly found the address we had been given. It was a business. We were let in. We hoped to spend the night here, but no one knew that we were coming. However, we carried a letter of introduction written by our friends.

When we explained why we were here, the faces of the mother and daughter clouded over. To suddenly get five unexpected visitors in the middle of a miserable war was not something to look forward to.

Nevertheless, the people invited us into the living room to talk. We were already sure that we'd be able to spend the night here. But finding a place for us to sleep was a problem. Our offer to sleep on the floor, however, was rejected. They were determined to find us better sleeping quarters.

After conferring with a young man, Stoffel van Viegen, the organist at the famous Dom Kerk, who was in hiding there, our hosts decided three of us would sleep here. Stoffel took me to the evacuation office of De Bilt to inquire further.

When, after a short walk, we entered the building, it gave me the willies. A few officials sat behind a huge table and piles of straw were spread here and there in the building. The place filled me with foreboding. Stoffel elbowed me as if to say, "Let's get out of here."

But I approached one of the officials to ask whether we could eat and sleep here. I was told that we could join the men, women and children sleeping here and there wherever they could find a place in the straw, but we'd have to wait and see whether there was anything to eat. We'd get the leftovers from the central kitchen of De Bilt. Again Stoffel poked me, signaling we should leave.

After thanking the official for his help, we hurried out of there, glad to get out of that smelly hole.

When we got back, Stoffel immediately took the offensive: "There is no way these people can sleep there. It's an awful mess."

The lady of the house agreed and employed all her ingenuity to make room for all five of us. Although I had expected it, it was a huge relief. We were invited to share a meal with the family and spent a very enjoyable evening. We felt very much at home with these ordinary people.

After a good night of rest, we arose the next morning revived and with new energy. A new day lay before us. What it would bring, we had no idea.

This lady too prepared some things for us to eat along the way. As soon as it became light enough, we said our goodbyes and were on our way once again. Our pastor had given us the address of his brother in Nijkerk, although it was 40 km we planned to make the trip that day. The skies were clear and it promised to be a beautiful day.

With new heart, we were soon on our way on the scenic, tree-lined road to Amersfoort. After we had walked about an hour, someone coming from the opposite direction warned us that near the infamous concentration camp at Amersfoort the Germans were picking up all men between 17 and 55.

We were seized with dread, uncertain what to do. Take our chances in the lion's den or turn back? Nearby was a small café, and we decided to buy a cup of coffee while we talked it over.

Right after we sat down two men entered the café who also ordered a cup of coffee and then launched into an excited conversation about the roundup of men at Amersfoort.

We said nothing but listened intently to the discussion. The café owner entered into the conversation too. We learned that the German checkpoint had been operating for several days already and that it wasn't discontinued at night.

At last we decided we had no choice but to go on. Perhaps a good ruse would get us through. I took over the baby buggy and also the rope for the wagon. Henk walked alongside the buggy and Annie pushed the wagon from behind.

Ankje stayed back. She would wait awhile and then catch up to us on the bike. When the Germans stopped me, I would show my identification listing my occupation as doctor and tell them a story about being bombed in The Hague and that my wife had disappeared so that I had to bring my children to Friesland to be cared for there.

Not until I got past the checkpoint would Ankje follow us.

With these plans in mind, and many doubts, we resumed our journey. Would the Germans believe me? Would they test my knowledge of medicine?

When we arrived at the checkpoint, we were immediately summoned to halt by a rough-looking national guardsman, a lackey for the Germans. He demanded to see my identification. My children looked on in fear, following every movement. After examining my identification very closely, he asked what



I was doing here. Promptly, without blinking or blushing, I told him the story I had invented. He seemed to accept my story.

But he did not let me pass. He said, "Yes, sir, but I'm sorry – you'll have to come with me."

Once more I appealed to him on the basis of my occupation as medical supervisor and my children, who began wailing pitifully. This brought a German officer to the scene. He asked the guardsman what was going on, to which I quickly responded.

The officer put more stock in my story than the guardsman, for suddenly he spun around and shouted in German, "Get the heck out of here!"

I didn't wait for him to repeat his rude command. We hurried off as fast as we could go in case the man changed his mind.

A short time later, Ankje caught up to us. She had watched in suspense from a distance as the scene played itself out.

That was one obstacle behind us. What more awaited us ahead? The dreaded IJssel Line still lay ahead, but we did not want to think about that now. It was turning into a beautiful winter day and it was almost pleasant traveling this road.

We reached Amersfoort around noon, too early to stop for the day, so we decided to try for Nijkerk before dark. Without stopping, we walked through the city.

By the time we reached the other side, however, we felt our strength beginning to ebb. After walking for a time, we asked some passers-by how far it was to Nijkerk. "Another half hour or so," they answered. We figured we could make another half hour. But a half hour passed and still there was no sign of a town.

We did see that there had been a lot of bombing and strafing around here. Numerous buildings and homes were reduced to rubble. Again we stopped a passer-by to ask him how far it was to Nijkerk. The answer was the same as before: "Another half hour."

By this time we were so exhausted that we couldn't go another fifteen minutes. But we couldn't stay here: we had to keep going. With leaden feet, we dragged ourselves on. At last, as darkness was setting in, we spotted the vague shapes of the beautiful city of Nijkerk.



## 60th anniversary

# Let's sing wherever we are!

One of the things CC readers looked forward to most in the early 50's were the "Immigrant musings" (*Emigrantenmijmeringen*) written by Arie Doff. As a young boy I recall overhearing speculation about the identity of Arie Doff between my mother and some of her friends.

"Did you read the one about...." one of them would say, and she would repeat

the entire story, which all of them had, of course, already read, because almost everyone subscribed to CC in those days.

I was only ten or eleven at the time, so I didn't read CC, but I still remember some of the stories invented by Arie because I heard them told several times over. So, in celebration of our 60th, here is one of Arie's finest, translated into English.



## Let's sing wherever we are!

Arie Doff

Yesterday everything went amiss. It began at breakfast. Katrien asked our second daughter why she hadn't come home till 12:30 last night, since choir practice was finished at 11:30.

Alie (that's the name we gave her, although after we came to Canada she's also called Alice) replied rather snippily that she had gone for a walk with Fred van Buren.

Katrien has no use for the young man. Why not, I have no idea. There's nothing unusual about him other than that he's a bit dreamy. But I think he is good-hearted, and he's a good worker, although he doesn't earn very much.

Anyway, you know how those things go. Mother asks some searching questions and daughter demonstrates that her tongue is a two-edged sword. To cut to the closing act: daughter leaves the table sobbing and stomps out of the parental home.

A sullen, uncomfortable silence settled in the room, sustained by Katrien. After this chilly course was served up, my wife had a few grievances to set before me because I had not said anything. I left the house in protest – without my usual parting kiss.

My mood was reflected in the weather. It was raining cobblestones, and then a nasty wind carried off my hat. After a wild sprint, I had to fish it out of a mud puddle.

When I got to work, I discovered that the boss's mood was even worse than my own, and his mood infected everyone else.

At lunch time, Jan Kruit, the champion critic of our congregation, sat down beside me. He commented on last Sunday's sermon, which wasn't dogmatic enough to his liking, and he found fault with the entire congregation in general and the consistory in particular. Even this didn't cheer me up.

About 2:30 the boss came out and told us we might as well go home. Our lumber was pretty well used up and the trucks could not get through to make further deliveries. The roads in this new district, where we are building homes, had become impassable due to the rain. That meant a half day's wages lost.

I arrived home in a foul mood, where I was met by Katrien, whose mood had not altered even a quarter turn since that morning. That comes with having a strong character: she does not change very quickly.

Since there was nothing at home to give me hope, I announced that I was going to Van Wolde's to pick up some eggs. The Van Wolde's have rented a small farm some five miles out of town. The city bus takes you to within a half mile of their place. We always get our egg supplies from them because the poultry products available in the local stores leave something to be desired according to Katrien.

So, catching the bus with my empty egg carton, I ascertained that the world and Arie Doff still could not manage a smile.

After a 15 minute ride, I got out. The rest of the expedition had to be done on foot. Although the rain had stopped while I was on the bus, this did nothing to improve the condition of the muddy road to the Van Wolde farm.

As I plodded through the mud, I saw life in all its dimensions as black and bitter as gall. After ten steps, I lost my rubbers in the thick, sticky clay which hungrily sucked them down. I had to travel the rest of the way without protection. My socks were soon soaked with muddy water, and by the time I reached my destination my pantlegs were slick. Only a week earlier I had paid the princely sum of \$1.00 to have them steam-cleaned. My mood reached its lowest low point.

Sadly I opened the door of the Van Wolde's simple residence. I looked into the combination kitchen and living room, where throngs of children were scattered about on the floor, fighting, playing with toys or drawing pictures. The Van Wolde's have ten children of which the oldest is ten years old.

Glumly I asked whether their mother was home, and he replied in a mixture of English and Drents: "Moeder is in the barn. It's melkenstied, you know."

So, back into the mud, to the barn, which stood quite a distance from the house. Along with the reproaches I lev-

eled at myself, I also aimed a few at Mother van Wolde because along with ten children she also chose to care for five cows. Her husband didn't get home till late in the evening, so she had to slave from six in the morning till she went to bed 10 o'clock at night. What a life!

As I approached the barn, I heard a woman's voice, a high, clear voice accompanied by the trumpet of a lowing cow: "Our God has laid a firm foundation ...."

A contented, happy mother was singing, and she was not just singing for those stupid cows but for the gifts of her children, her husband and herself and God's people – and for Arie Doff.

I was stopped in the middle of a large mud puddle, for it was miraculous the change that happened inside me. I can't describe it. At one and the same moment I was seized by the impulse to sing and to scold – to scold Arie because he was such a miserable, self-pitying creature.

The power of a Psalm!

When I was headed homeward again 15 minutes later, there was still lots of mud on the road but there was also a song, a Psalm, in my heart.

I got home late in the afternoon. Katrien was standing at the back door and looked lovingly at my carton of eggs, but cast a disapproving look in my direction.

Leaving my shoes, socks and slacks in the back porch, I hurried upstairs to change. As I pulled on a dry pair of pants and fastened my belt, I sang boldly of the Cushite, the Philistine and the Tyrian.

Katrien came into the bedroom and said, "My, you're jolly all of a sudden!"

And before I could get to "Zion's holy mount," she planted a big kiss on me that rang out like a church bell.

Let's keep on singing! Let's sing wherever we are!

## Kingdom come

Crammed into the airline seat, munching stale pretzels, sipping flat Diet Pepsi, looking deep inside for the Kingdom to come.

A baby squalls in the back row. The lawyer fighting for the armrest, rolls his eyes toward the sky, looking heavenward for the Kingdom to come.

For the twenty-nine seconds between take off and "wheels up", pilots with practiced eyes look out to where the Kingdom comes.

Rushing through O'Hare while checking monitors rushers straggle just long enough to wonder if the Kingdom ever comes.

Touching tarmac in Tucson where a sun gone purpled, low lulls soft desert breezes to announce that soon the Kingdom comes.

At home the blinking box broadcasts that all will stay the same – skirmishes, wars, rumored wars – always doubting that the Kingdom surely comes.

I think more of Kingdoms, when I ride the winds on silver rivet wings, and of that day, someday, when the Kingdom finally comes.

The spectacle is better from above these mountains slowly falling to the sea where all is smoky haze and the Kingdom finally comes on some other travel day like this.

Rodney J. Hugen

All who call on God in true faith, earnestly from the heart, will certainly be heard, and will receive what they have asked and desired, although not in the hour or in the measure, or the very thing which they ask; yet they will obtain something greater and more glorious than they had dared to ask....

Martin Luther



## Ecclesiastes

# The world as a place of injustice

A.A. Van Ruler

(translated by H. DerNederlanden)

Ecclesiastes 3:16, 17:

And moreover I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there.

I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work. (KJV)

And I saw something else under the sun: In the place of judgment — wickedness was there, in the place of justice — wickedness was there.

I thought in my heart, "God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity; a time for every deed." (NIV)

In these verses the Preacher continues to spin out the thread of his thought. The major thesis which he defends boils down to this: all human effort is in vain. By this he means that it does not really add a single stone to the dam; it eventuates in nothing. The tedious, active earthly existence of man exhibits a colossal futility.

In order to defend and clarify this major thesis, the Preacher enlists a surprisingly large number of arguments.

The same goes for these verses. Here he adds a new consideration to the many that have already passed in review. He derives this argument from the way people relate to each other in society.

There's a great deal of injustice that happens there — both individually and collectively.

Individually, people frustrate, tease, disappoint, and hurt each other on a personal level, and they treat each other unfairly and unjustly. And what happens on the level of individuals also occurs, in different forms and on a much larger scale between groups of people. I have in mind classes and hierarchies in society, as well as ethnic groups,



Christ judging the nations

nations, and races. It would, of course, be ridiculous to look for injustice within a single class, bloc of nations, or race. One group usually has very little with which to reproach the other. Much of the time they are equally guilty.

In the meantime, the situation is critical. Injustice scars a person very deeply. One may endure lovelessness, in the sense of a lack of love. But if justice, too, is lacking, then a person revolts with his whole being. To have to endure injustice and to have to look on helplessly while others suffer injustice is horrible.

Apparently, we human beings value justice even more highly than love. At least we realize that to society and mankind justice is even more indispensable than love. Justice is the bare minimum:

for Dordt was and is part of God's kingdom. God was and is using it as one of his instruments to shape us and to turn us into witnesses to the transforming power of his Spirit.

That's what the traveling troupe reminded me of. It was good to be reminded of it.

it is the least that we insist should always be present.

But very often it is not. This is not only horrible, it is also perplexing. What kind of world is this where often even the minimum conditions for human life are obviously lacking? Isn't this world God's world? And don't we maintain that being is good, that it is better than non-being? How, then, is it possible that people abuse one another so terribly, and that they deal so unjustly with one another?

The Preacher, in his usual inclination to one-sidedness and exaggeration, immediately draws this condition of injustice to its extreme. He says that there is not only injustice among people and groups of people, but that injustice prevails even in those places specifically designed to dispense justice. This, of course, is a very far-reaching corruption of society. If even the judges are no longer trustworthy but arbitrarily favor the powerful and their distinguished friends, where do we turn? When the crush of society threatens to repress us, the agents of justice are our last refuge.

We should not, in my opinion,

raise too much of a hue and cry about the injustice of judges. To administer justice is an amazingly difficult business. Life can become such a complex tangle; parties and witnesses are often unreliable and dishonest. Besides, the minds of the judge are sometimes so limited that they honestly cannot discover what is right and just in a given situation.

The task of the judge is perhaps the highest and most difficult one on earth. According to the Bible, the judge, in a manner of speaking, acts in the place of God. His work is of a divine nature. The Bible therefore also admonishes us to pray especially for those who sit in high places.

But judges are not simply limited people. They are also sinful people. Corruption can to a lesser or greater degree also penetrate into the administration of justice. Then injustice also reigns in the place of justice and in the place of righteousness.

Then, the Preacher means to say, life no longer amounts to much of anything. People may still do their best and exert themselves, but all toil runs dead in the barren desert of a corrupt society and a corrupt

state. This, too, is one aspect of the futility and meaninglessness of existence. According to the Bible, the social question in the widest sense of the word must be taken with complete seriousness. The meaningfulness of existence also depends on whether social ideals are realized. If they are not, and insofar as they are not, the meaning of existence is also not realized.

But even in the face of this enormous problematic, the Preacher has still another arrow in his bow. Judges and ministers and all those who in one way or another exert authority and possess power stand in the forefront of God's judgment. They are first in line, for the Lord God is especially interested in justice, in social ideals, in the manner in which people live together, and in the manner in which society is established in its laws and institutions, and in the administration of justice.

This is notion that should please us. God watches over justice. All injustice shall be avenged. In this way, one day the earth will be swept clean of all injustice and violence.

But in this connection we must also remember that there is an appointed time for every concern and for every task. Injustice is not avenged immediately. There is an appointed time for it. This means that injustice, too, must have its time.

The New Testament enters into this matter much more deeply than the Old. The Old Testament agrees, to a remarkable extent, with Schiller's saying that the history of the world is the judgment of the world (Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht), and that therefore all injustice will be undone within history.

The New Testament is no longer quite so confident in this respect. It shifts judgment to the end of time: it speaks of the last judgment, the final judgment.

In the meantime, we march to a different tune: we must live and endure much injustice not in anger, but in love — in the same way that Christ endured and bore all injustice.

However, because everything has its appointed time, including judgment, in the meantime we must in many ways live in the mire of injustice. There, a great deal of life bogs down. The resulting frustration can only be endured by love.

## Dordt .. cont. from page 11

Everyone has stories, not just the students, but the faculty and the people in the community and anyone who came into contact with Dordt over the years. And the stories weave together into a bigger story. Ultimately they are woven into the biggest story of all,



## Christian living

### Refugees ... continued from page 9

for each other, and powerfully experienced what it means to be the body of Christ as described in 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31. We also grew in our love and gratitude to God.

Second, I learned that when I remembered that the glory of God is and must always remain the reason for doing refugee resettlement work, I was energized to carry on with the work. When I forgot that, the task seemed overwhelming, or problems began to irritate me, or I allowed discouragement to settle in. Pohl offers yet another insight which I found helpful: "... the demands of hospitality can only be met by persons sustained by a strong life of prayer and times of solitude" (pp. 13). I understood that not only did I need to rest in God through prayer, the Refugee Committee also needed to keep its focus on God. As chair of the committee, I began our meetings with Scripture passages that focused on God's love for the poor and oppressed. When we remembered how great the Father's love is for people the world considers powerless, we were motivated to bring the needs of our family before God in prayer, and to carry on with our work.

For me, part of keeping God's glory central to the task of resettlement work was the ongoing need to check my personal motives for being involved. I found this especially necessary when difficult decisions had to be made or when I experienced stress because of the work. At those times, I didn't feel the usual sense of well-being produced by helping others. I needed to ask myself, am I doing this work for the wrong reason? Am I doing it because it frequently makes me feel useful and needed? Am I doing it so I'll be appreciated and loved? Searching my heart about my motives always brought me back to the foundation on which I stand – that all needs to be done to God's glory.

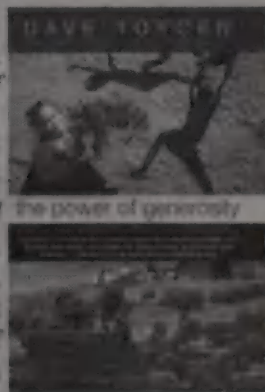
Third, I discovered that it's crucial to keep the big picture in mind. Let me explain. By the time I met the family, years of their personal history which I knew little or nothing about had transpired. I, along with the committee, was placed on their journey midstream. I may have had certain goals in mind for them and my relationship with them. Sometimes goals were attained. At other times they weren't. Though at first I found this distressing, I learned to keep in mind that I've been placed on their journey for a short time to help them. God placed others on their path before they met me; if and when I am no longer in the picture, God will lead other people to assist them.

Fourth, I realized how important it is to help the refugee family become community-rich. In other words, newcomers need to be quickly connected to not only their resettlement committee, but also to church members, a school community, sports teams, neighbors, and others who will welcome them and look out for their welfare. As they become involved with others, they'll experience healing in their uprooted lives. In her book *The Middle of Everywhere: The World's Refugees Come to Our Town*, Mary Pipher writes, "I now realize that more important than being loved is being able to love. Caring for others is what motivates humans to get out of bed in the morning. It gives life purpose and meaning. Especially if one has had great losses, the best cure is to find new people to love" (New York: Harcourt, 2002, pp. 291). Refugees who are community-rich have reason to get up and face each new day, even when they encounter many obstacles.

Fifth, I learned that the goal of a Refugee Committee is to eventually work itself out of a job. Refugees need to be empowered to make their own decisions, to seek higher education, to become financially stable, and to take whatever steps are necessary to becoming independent after the one year sponsorship requirement is fulfilled. In that way, too, churches will be able to begin the process of sponsoring more refugees who eagerly await a new home.

In his book *The Power of Generosity: How to Transform Yourself and Your World*, Dave Toyce, President and CEO of World Vision Canada, makes

a profound case for the way generous people – those who give of their time and resources – are blessed personally and are a blessing to others. He concludes, "The generosity journey is looking for more travellers" (Toronto: HarperCollins, 2004, pp. 19). What I've learned in the last year has convinced me that the refugee sponsorship journey also needs more travellers – Christians who are willing to take up the joyful and challenging privilege of providing hospitality to the displaced foreigner, in Jesus' name.



### Endowments: a steward's tool to provide financial stability

Have you ever wondered what would happen to a charity that you have supported for the last 30 years when your giving stops because the Lord has taken you to your eternal home? In this issue, I've asked my colleague James VanderLaan to address this question by introducing a financial tool that you can use to make a gift continue when you are no longer here.

*They should collect all the food of these good years that are coming and store up the grain under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in the cities for food. This food should be held in reserve for the country, to be used during the seven years of famine that will come upon Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined by the famine.*

Genesis 41:35,36

I recently attended a Christian conference and was reminded that when we pass away we aren't leaving "gifts" to those behind because we never owned anything to begin with. God has called us all to be "managers" of his resources. We do not have ownership rights to what we leave behind.

When the Lord takes us home we have the responsibility to pass along his belongings. What will happen to the blessings you managed? Will they go to your family? Will your family honor this tremendous responsibility? Will it go to a favorite charity? Will the charity honor this responsibility?

Consider Gerald and Martha who have supported many charities for their entire life. They know that when they pass away they will be the richest they have ever been as all their assets will be evaluated and liquidated. They would like to pass along a portion of "God's estate" to a specific charity but are concerned that the amount will be absorbed into the charity's annual budget, and that there will be no sustained benefit. Instead, Gerald and Martha have decided to set up an Endowment Fund so that the charities dear to their heart will continue to be blessed with financial support long after they have passed away.

In many ways, an Endowment Fund is like the Energizer Bunny: it keeps giving and giving and giving. The principal in the Endowment Fund is preserved and earns income, which is distributed to the charities specified by Gerald and Martha. They recognize the importance of leaving a testimony of God's goodness and faithfulness. Each year the Endowment Fund makes

### Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

a disbursement to their selected charities. A letter of thanks is sent to their children which acts as a reminder of God's blessings on their parents.

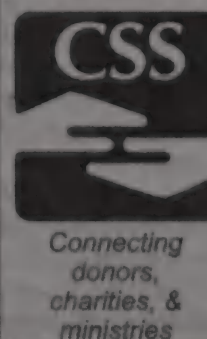
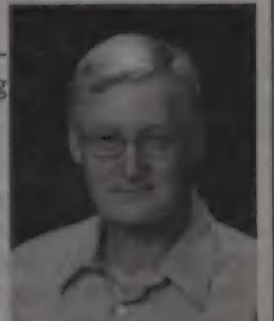
Christian Stewardship Services currently administers Endowment Funds for individuals and schools. Many Christian schools and colleges recognize the need for long term financial sustainability. A school Endowment Fund provides donors the opportunity of leaving a sizeable gift to the school without it being absorbed in that year's operating budget – possibly causing an imbalance by making it too comfortable this year financially, and a possible reduction in support the following year. Many schools have specific Endowment Funds set up for tuition assistance, capital campaigns and debt reduction. Choosing to direct your gift to a specific endowment fund, your gift will be used for the purpose for which it was put in place. It is the responsibility of the organization's governing Board to ensure that this is so.

**Stewardly Tip:** Once you have determined what you will leave to your family when you pass away, consider the opportunity to establish an endowment fund that will continue to support your favorite charities for many years to come. Or consider adding to an already established charity's endowment fund. The annual gift coming from this fund will continue to bless the work of ministry without any effort on their part. Call your regional CSS representative for more details.

**Readers:** Share your Stewardly Tips so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

**Next issue:** Recreation: Connecting with God

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## Review

## Unveiling Islam: An insider's look at Muslim life and beliefs

By Ergun Mehmet Caner and Emir Fethi Caner, Kregel Publications 2002, 256 pp, \$20.99.

Reviewed by **Harry Antonides**

*The clash of cultures between Christianity and Islam dates back to Muhammad.... The clash is not just a matter of dissimilar cultures. Many Muslims and Christians do not know what they themselves believe. Consequently, their reactions are improper since their information is inaccurate. Confusion through politically correct ecumenism and relativism has prolonged ignorance. (p.202)*

A few days after the destruction of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on that dreadful September day nearly four years ago, thousands gathered to mourn and pray. At one such event in New York City, a Christian minister began the invocation: "We pray in the name of our God – the God of Christianity, Judaism and Islam...." Oprah Winfrey assured the crowd that Islam is a peaceful and loving religion.

The authors of *Unveiling Islam* ask whether it is true that the people gathered at this stadium, Christians, Jews, and Muslims, are indeed serving the same God. Similarly, they ask whether the kind of "Oprah-style spirituality," according to which every person has an "inner light," which equalizes every faith system, since each person's journey of discovery is a search for the "inner light of meaning and purpose."

Ergun and Emir Caner are well qualified to struggle with these questions at the heart of the Muslim faith (about truth and the issue of war and peace). They were born and raised in a Muslim family living first in Sweden, then in the United States. Their father Acar Mehmet Caner was a devout Muslim, active in establishing the Islamic Foundation Center in Columbus, Ohio. The family did their daily prayers, celebrated Ramadan, and faithfully read the Koran and Hadith.

When the Caner brothers embraced the Christian faith, their father was horrified and disowned them. This was a terrible hardship for the sons, who admired and deeply loved their father. They were reconciled to their father seventeen years later and only four days before he died unchanged in his commitment to the Muslim faith. They explain:

*As you begin this investigation into Islam, its teachings, and its adherents, we want you to see the human side of religion – where faith often means the total rejection of culture, ethnicity, family, and friends. To find heaven's glory in Jesus Christ, we Caner brothers lost our father – our earthly hero – as have millions of others worldwide.*

*Unveiling Islam's* sixteen chapters range over all the major tenets of Islam as well as other highlights of this religion. In clear language the authors deal with the history of Islam, its battles, holy books, internal divisions, the life and teachings of Muhammad, his marriage to eleven wives (including the then six-year-old Aishah), the place of women, religious liberty, jihad, and the relationship between Christianity and Islam. It includes two indices of topics, a summary of Christian versus Muslim beliefs, and a glossary of Arabic/Islamic terms.

In the following I want to touch on three major tenets/practices of Islam highlighted in this book: the Islamic holy books, God or Allah, and the meaning of jihad.

### The holy books

The story of the Koran's origin is complex, leaving skeptics with plenty of questions. However, to the Muslim believer, the Koran is the revelation directly from Allah to the Prophet Muhammad (570-632). Tradition and the Koran have it that he received these revelations while undergoing seizures, or via dreams, visions, angels, and from Allah directly who spoke from behind a veil.

These revelations were said to have been written on whatever was handy to Muhammad during the unpredictable occurrences, such as leg or thigh bones of dead animals, palm leaves, skins, mats, stones, and bark, or through memorization by Muhammad's disciples. These scattered recollections were not compiled till the years 646 – 650 under the direction of the third caliph Uthman. He oversaw the selection from a large pool of sayings that existed at that time. It is this Arabic version that is held to be God's final revelation that existed eternally in heaven.

The Koran is seen as a correction of the corrupted Bible, especially the epistles of the apostle Paul. It contains a number of

stories that are adapted from the Bible in a way that makes them unrecognizable, especially at they pertain to Jesus, his mother Mary, and to the Trinity.

In addition, there are the writings in the Hadith and the Sunnah, which mostly consist of stories about the life and teachings of Muhammad. The South African Council of Muslim Theologians has explained that the Koran without the Hadith or Sunnah is unintelligible in places. They state that therefore the Holy Koran has in several verses "ordered Muslims to follow the Prophet in all his deeds and sayings. Therefore, if one believes in the Holy Qur'an, there is no other alternative but to uphold the Hadith of the Prophet."

### Jehovah God or Allah

There is a widespread impression, even among some Christians, that the God of the Bible and Allah as presented in the Koran, are really the same divine being. But the authors of *Unveiling Islam* make it crystal clear that this is not true.

*For one thing, the first pillar of Islam is the absolute monotheistic nature of Allah, by which is meant a total rejection of the triune nature of God as revealed in the Bible. When Muslims confess that there is no God but Allah they mean to say that the biblical revelation about God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, is a falsehood. They are taught that to believe that Jesus is God who took upon himself the human nature, is blasphemy, for it would mean that God is divided, which would make him less than fully divine.*

Further, the God of the Koran is distant from creation: he rules all things and controls all things so that there is no space for human freedom. One of the most often used phrases by Muslims is "Allah wills it." Though the names of Allah include such terms as Most Gracious, Most Merciful, the Compassionate, there is no sense of tenderness and a loving relationship with Allah. Instead, Muslims are required to follow very carefully a rigid regime of the so-called five pillars of Islam.

In contrast, the Bible reveals a God who loves the world and desires that all come to life in Christ. A Christian is described in the Bible as a "temple of the Holy Spirit," and we are invited to address God with the intimate term of "our Father" who forgives

and heals those who turn to him in repentance and faith.

The God of Islam weighs his followers on a scale in which the good and bad are measured by a stern judge. As the authors of *Unveiling Islam* put it:

*Even the most faithful and devout Muslim refers to Allah only as servant to master; Allah is a distant sovereign. Some titles for Allah connote mercy, but it is a redefined mercy: Allah is merciful because he did not kill me or leave me in peril. Yahweh [God of the Bible] is a caring, loving, and intimately involved Father.*

The controversy about the real meaning of this term continues. Most Muslim spokespersons in the western democracies insist that the Koran's meaning of jihad has nothing to do with the murder and mayhem inflicted by Islamic extremists. They say that jihad refers to the internal struggles of individual Muslims to do good and to work for the betterment of the world.

However, they cannot deny that those who killed some 3000 people on 9/11 were convinced that their horrible deeds met with the approval of Allah – and in fact were celebrated by jubilant crowds of Muslims. The perpetrators of this destruction of innocent lives were convinced that their deed was a heroic act of martyrdom that would assure them a specially privileged place in heaven.

On February 23, 1998 five Islamic leaders, including Osama bin Laden, signed a fatwa declaring war on the United States and its allies. They quoted Allah's Book: (the Koran) as follows:

*But when the forbidden months are past, then fight and slay the pagans wherever you find them, seize them, beleaguer them, and lie in wait for them in every strategem (of war); and peace be upon our prophet, Muhammad Bin-'Abdallah, who said "I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped, Allah who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my orders."*

Then followed a long list of grievances, mostly detailing America's defilement of the sacred lands of Islam, its support of Israel, and the defeat of Iraq. This fatwa claims that these "crimes and



sins committed by the Americans" amount to a declaration of war on Allah, the prophet Muhammad, and all Muslims.

This is why the authors of this fatwa pronounce that it is the duty of every Muslim to kill Americans and their allies – civilians and military – wherever they can. This order to kill is said to be in accordance with these words of Almighty Allah: "and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together," and "fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in Allah."

The brothers Caner provide plenty of evidence from the Koran and the Hadith that the signers of this chilling fatwa did not read into their holy books what is not there. On the contrary, they convincingly show that these militant followers of Islam understood the Koran and acted in keeping with its teachings of jihad.

### Must reading

There is much, much more in this book as it explains, backed with numerous references to the relevant texts, the history of Islamic conquest, its treatment of women and minorities, and the punishment for those who turn away from Islam. In short, this is a careful analysis of the mindset of those who read the Islamic holy books as the blueprint for a new world controlled by one system of thought and one political order.

What makes this book all the more relevant today is that the two authors are living testimony that by God's grace people are able to escape from the hold that Islam has over more than a billion people. Having lived the Islamic way of life, they are eminently qualified to explain the truth about that religion. Both are now university professors teaching theology and

See p. 17...



## Life

## When my grandfather died ...

Christopher de Vinck

When my grandfather died, I kept the secret inside of me as I ran around the house chasing after my sisters and brothers, lingering at the window watching the blue jay peck at the empty bird feeder, and sleeping in fits and starts that night.

No one knew that I was not brave. I was, actually, afraid for the death of my grandfather which was the first time someone in my life disappeared.

My grandfather frightened me when I was a child, not because he was mean. He was a general in the Belgian army. His left arm was a useless appendage that hung to the side of his body like a broken wing. He was wounded in World War I, but I knew even a war could not kill my grandfather, so he must be magical and a bit frightening.

When we received the call from Belgium that my grandfather died in his sleep, I stepped outside to the back lawn and stood under the rose trellis that he constructed the summer before. There were no flowers, no leaves, just the dormant vine waiting for spring. We can look at the empty trellis of our lives and give in to the sorrow, or we can imagine the first rose, and then the second and all returns like the magic garden in *Beauty and the Beast*.

We are alive. Horses gallop. Bats criss-cross through the night on their way. The neighbor's dog barks. A little Irish man with a wool beret walks past the house each morning. He'll wave his hand above his head if he sees me. I wave back from my door as I check the mail.

The earth spins on its axis as it swirls around the sun and everywhere there is motion: the clouds through the oak trees, the passenger jet with a tail of white etched against the distant sky, the school bus: yellow, filled with children. A spider walks across the ceiling. Life is difficult to know if we are afraid to look. It all seems so ordinary.

I liked playing cards with my grandfather, gin rummy. I liked how he held the cards in his good hand which was brown and freckled. I liked seeing his wedding ring and how he placed the cards flat on the table to pick up a new card from the deck with his good hand. Whenever I won a game, he smiled and all the wrinkles in his brown bag face creased into a gentleness that I remember to this day.

He never spoke to me about war. Often, during the day, his horse was brought to his house and he dressed in his uniform and rode in the park in Brussels. I would have liked to have seen my grandfather in his uniform

in a quick gallop riding among the flowers and tourists and mothers with children in their hands and little boys sailing miniature boats in the fountain as the general rode through – the picture that was in my mind when I heard that my grandfather died in his sleep.

We all have a vision of paradise in our minds, a promise that there is a place for children and rose gardens, a time when blue jays announce the coming day, or someone explained the existence of heaven, and we were glad.

I have seen these past number of years a fear in the eyes of people I love. Death pursues us. The horrid events of the day are scrolled onto the news broadcasts each evening as if they are calling cards of the devil. People are easily swayed to believe things are not as good as they once were.

It is shameful to gather a people and ask them to remember a gentler time when the windows needed to be washed, and the laundry flapped on the line out back and it was spring and we were young and all seemed possible, and then to tell those same people that there is a lack of fresh water in the world, or that the economy is slipping and make people think that they have to be afraid.



Do not be afraid. My grandfather is on his horse riding, riding in his beautiful uniform, and I am standing under the trellis admiring the roses, and we all can join in the peace that we once felt as children. We need to renew our hope to the future for our own children and grandchildren so that they, too, can someday remember your embrace, and your whispering, "I love you, my little ones."

A few years after my grandfather died, my grandmother sent from Belgium his general's cap. In secret I ran up to my room with the hat under my arm, and then I stood before my mirror and slowly placed the hat on my head. I tilted my head, tried to wrinkle my face, blinked and then I saluted the man I saw in the mirror.

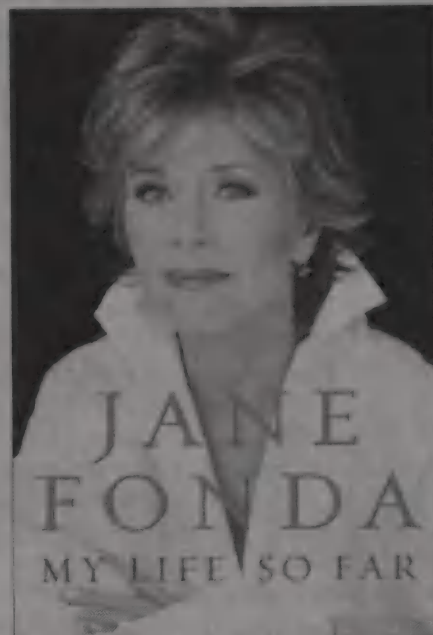
*Christopher de Vinck is the author of The Power of the Powerless published by Crossroad Books*

them the Good News that God so loved the world that he sent his Son to save it.

This is a most timely and superb presentation of the Gospel of love and inclusion versus a religion of rules and exclusion. It should be in every church and school library – if not in every Christian home.

*hantonides@sympatico.ca*

## What we can learn from Jane so far



People are spilling the beans all over North America nowadays. Whatever happened to keeping our confessions to a circle of friends? Even that is hard sometimes because we don't want to be seen as 'complaining' or 'disloyal' to our loved ones. Plus we used to keep quiet about the things we were ashamed of. But now celebrities routinely expose themselves to the elements. I wonder if they really expect understanding from the million or so readers or if they simply hope to be on the bestseller list for a while. Still, Jane Fonda is making it clear she is telling a lot in her book *My Life So Far* because she has something important to say.

There is no doubt Jane Fonda, author, actor and activist has led a full and public life so far. So, what could be wrong with all that? What was it about her life that makes her want to live 'act three' with absolute 'intention?' On the surface it certainly seems she has it all. Or is it still not enough? Does she, like many of us, look across the fence and notice what she does not have rather than appreciating all that she has? What does this regal and stunning 67 year-old have to tell us that would motivate us to change our lives? Why did this 'can do' woman make herself so vulnerable that critics can easily make mince meat out of her?

## Finding her voice

Jane Fonda's book, chronicles her accomplishments as well as her personal struggles. What is specifically interesting is her relationship with her famous but distant father, Henry Fonda and the suicide death of her mother. She believes the dynamics in her family-of-origin saddled her with the "disease to please," especially the men in her life.

In one of her interviews she explains it is mostly a problem for girls who are made to feel they are not good enough and that they have to be perfect in order to be loved. And so, it deeply affected her relationships

## Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

with her three husbands. Although she was a big star and activist to the public, she talks about *not* having a voice in her marital relationships. Furthermore, when a CBC interviewer asked her why she was so forthright about some of the intimate details of her marital life, she simply responded she not only had to be real but she wanted to show that she especially lost her voice behind the bedroom door!

Her honesty, apparently, does upset some of her fans. At one of her book signings a gentleman remarked "Jane, we've always seen you as so strong. You're a 'can do' woman. Why would you want to take this from us with this book where you are so vulnerable?"

She told him she did not want to maintain a myth or an image. She wanted the book to be real so that it would help people.

## Reclaiming hearts and voices

Jane Fonda believes she learned something about what is going on between the sexes. In an interview with Cindy Pearlman she says the patriarchal social paradigm has damaged both women and men. It causes men to separate and cut themselves off from their hearts in order to be 'real men.' This allows men and women to be less full and less human. The solution for the troubled gender relationship is 'men reclaiming their hearts and women reclaiming their voices.'

Jane admits she hates being in the limelight. Yet, she opened her vein and let it all pour out. She said she felt 'lighter' when the book was done. I wonder if it is also her way of saying she can accept herself with all her strengths and weaknesses and is asking the public to do the same. She is a Christian now, however not the 'literal' kind. Still, she insists the book can change a person's life.

The thing is, are we ready to *learn*? Her story clearly shows how our early years influence the kind of relationships we form later in life for better or worse no matter which side of the track we are from. And the irony is that her 'disease to please' did not save her marriages. The advice from the 'can-do' woman is for women to speak up and men to be in touch with themselves.

It sounds easy but it is not. Both ways of being takes courage as well as the ability to eat some major humble pie. Still, if we are willing to learn our lives would be so much better.

*Arlene Van Hove is now on sabbatical from Cascade Christian Counselling Association in Surrey, B.C.*



*Continued from p. 16*

church history. They have lectured at many seminars and other public meetings about Islam and its relationship to Christianity.

Above all, this book invites and enables Christians to acquire a better understanding of Islam. Not for the purpose of attacking its adherents but to be better able to present to



## Opinion

## Mainly on Money

Bert Hielema

## House prices, water and burst bubbles

In 1971, 34 years ago, I was a Real Estate Broker in St. Catharines. Boom times. Builders were so busy and demand so great that overnight the list prices of new houses went up by 10 percent.

Shortly after that the Ontario Government, wanting to stop speculation as flipping was rampant, introduced the so-called Valuation Day Tax, effective December 31 1971. This desperate measure came too late: the boom had run its course and house prices stabilized or even fell, while value of potential subdivision land, bought at the top of the market, plummeted, and with it the fortune of many a builder.

I was reminded of this when I saw on May 17 a program on PBS about boom-times in southern California, especially Los Angeles and San Diego. One of our daughters plans to move from there and in talking to her, I could hardly believe that, at a coming open house, she expects numerous bids well over her asking price.

However that presentation on the Jim Lehrer News Hour convinced me. It showed a seminar sponsored by real estate firms telling people how to become instant millionaires by buying and selling real estate, as simple bungalows, selling \$50-60,000 over list, go anywhere from \$500,000 to one million dollars, depending on location, even though only 17 percent of the population can afford this price-range.

The program also interviewed one less fortunate Californian who couldn't afford those exorbitant prices and decided to move into the desert – 100 km from work and 40 + Celsius temperatures – saving \$200,000 for now. I imagine that once the Peak Oil hits, perhaps as soon as this fall, the cost to fill the tank, to cool the house, to make the desert bloom, will drive him nuts.

Will we see a repeat of the Tech Boom? I remember when a Nortel share was \$120.00. Now it's somewhere in the \$3.00 range, after going as low as 77 cents. Only 15 percent of Americans – the better off – owned stocks, so when that market collapsed only those who could afford to lose, did. A fall in residential property prices will boomerang badly.

Some 70 percent of Americans are homeowners, and 35 percent have flexible mortgages. So when rates rise, so do their monthly payments. Now, with inflation low, things look fine. Soaring house prices have created lots of jobs directly in construction, and indirectly for banks, lawyers, mortgage brokers, appraisers, so much so that this industry as a whole comprises 12 percent of the economy, versus the usual 5 percent.

Cheap money has also supported consumer spending, as many homeowners have converted greater house values into cash by refinancing. Still there are stirrings that this will change. Nothing ever remains the same. This win-win situation will not last.

The press is full of speculation that there is a "housing bubble." *Barrons*, *Money* magazine, and *The Economist* have all run recent feature stories about the irrational run-up in home prices and the potential for a crash.

*The Economist* has published a series of articles with titles like "Castles in Hot Air," "House of Cards," "Bubble Trouble," and "Betting the House." A "bubble" is caused when people expect prices to propel ever upward. Lenders also lean that way, so they give 100 percent mortgages, confident that their investment will be cushioned by rising prices. No savings needed, fortunately, because the saving rate in America is approaching zero.

## Thank you China

How come rates are so low, and real estate values so high? China is the source of these blessings. The Chinese government has kept its currency down by buying huge quantities of dollar assets – about \$200 billion worth in 2004, and possibly as much as \$300 billion worth this year – and shipping them right back again by lending these vast sums at low rates to the most indebted nation in the world. As long as there is no bull in the China shop, all will be well, but floods, droughts, earthquakes, bird flu, any of these, can turn off the money tap.

But for now, thank you China, for temporarily insulating the U.S. economy from the effects of their huge budget deficits. First you have given us the Dollar Stores and Wal-Mart, now you are the cause of cheap mortgage money as well.

Even though Greenspan has raised short-term interest rates eight times since last June, long-term interest and mortgage rates are actually lower than last year. This has prompted record sales in new and existing homes, and prolonged the boom much longer than most analysts had expected. It also makes a fall that much more dangerous.

The 1970 boom was followed by a bust caused by high oil prices. When crude went down – as low as \$10.00 per barrel – up went the economy. We are now at the tail end of the longest stretch of economic growth since the depression, not counting the war years. With oil prices bubbling ever higher we have a double bubble. Expect double trouble. Or perhaps triple trouble.

## Children of earth and water

The world's water situation is rather precarious. Do you know that in the Alberta Oilsands, for each barrel of oil recovered, two and a half barrels of liquid waste are pumped into huge ponds? Where is all that water going to come from? It's more than likely that lack of water will stop this oil recovery scheme well before the last scoop of sand is processed.

Water is the key to a lot of things, including us, because we all are children of earth

and water. We can live without food for 40 days. We need water almost immediately. Nobody ever goes on a water strike. To grow crops we need sunshine, soil and water. The sun is not about to stop shining. We'll always have soil of some sort. But water? Will we always have it?

Only about one-quarter of one percent of the world's fresh water is in lakes and rivers, and, of that, only about 15 percent is available for human use, which works out to 2,000 cubic meters per person, more in the Western world and South America, less in Asia and Africa.

We all need water. Not too much. Not too little. Just the right amount. Our H<sub>2</sub>O use has increased 40 times in the last 300 years. Since 1900 it has spurted 9 fold while, thanks to industrialization, per capita use has doubled.

Now another complication: our energy cravings have thrown the weather out of kilter. The result: too much water where we don't want it – water, water everywhere, nor any drop to drink – and too little water where we need it.

## China faces a triple threat

This is especially the case in China, with 20 percent of the world's people. China only has a bit more than 1,000 cubic meters per inhabitant, the least of all industrial countries. To make a ton of steel or grow a ton of wheat requires that much. If the 1.2 billion Chinese run out of steel or wheat its government has some \$600 billion (US) in the bank, enough to bid on the world's supply and come out winners.

Importing food is easy. Importing water is impossible. No water. No development. No water. No crops. The very survival of China depends on access to clean water. Now China faces a triple threat: drought, severe pollution, and floods. Northern China is semi-desert. That's where Beijing is located, the site of the 2008 Olympics, the most crucial water test. It has a perilously low amount of 300 cubic meters per person a year. That is 300,000 litres.

My well pumps 36 imperial gallons per minute or 235,000 litres per day. It can supply in a day what a Beijing inhabitant has available for the entire year. Human beings in Beijing can't water their lawns or take a daily shower or even flush the toilet. In China more than 100 big cities are short of water.

Now its southern part too is drying out. There the rainfall is 40 percent below normal in some areas, while consumption is growing ever higher. The result is that crops are dying, fish farms are drying up and loss of hydro electricity has caused grid overloads and forced factories to tap power only overnight. By government ordinance restaurants and hotels have to limit use of electric lights.

The head of China's weather service, Qin Dahe, said the country "may face a grim situation with seasonal floods and drought this year with potential damage worse than last year, because two massive rain belts are predicted for the months of June to August that will impact the area between the Yangtze River and the mid- to upper reaches of the Yellow River." The result will be extensive flooding, drowning people, destroying crops and ruining buildings.

China's top weatherman said northeastern Sichuan and western parts of Tibet, as well as parts of southern Guangdong and Hainan provinces, are suffering the worst drought in 50 years, with 'catastrophic' consequences. His words.

Decades of pollution and misguided policies have left the country with a water crisis situation. Water tables are dropping by a meter or more each year.

China is not alone. Australia too faces drought. In some areas it has not rained properly for months. The drought that hit in 2002, Australia's worst in a century, is beginning to return. With 46 percent of Australia now declared to be in drought, federal "exceptional circumstances" assistance to farmers to help with groceries and interest payments on debt were growing by \$4 million a week.

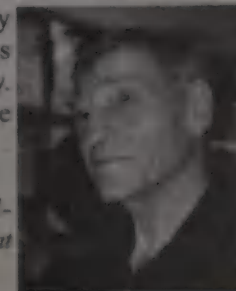
## key to basic survival

How about the USA? They have the Ogallala, which sounds like a sort of exotic dance, but it is an aquifer in size equal to Lake Ontario. It's like an underground river, running from Texas to South Dakota. A godsend for thirsty farmers who have been tapping into this water body for decades. Nearly 40 percent of all cattle in the USA drink water and eat grain thanks to Ogallala. Techniques borrowed from the oil trade are making it possible to reach any part of the stream, so day and night 150,000 powerful pumps are at work expecting a bottom-less well.

Well, in 1980 they reckoned they had 70 years supply. In 1990 less than 30 years. In 2000 perhaps 20 years, barring severe drought. Now, five years later, perhaps another 5-10 years. And then what? Goodbye, Las Vegas. Goodbye, Phoenix. Welcome Canadian cattle.

The next stop will mean tapping the Great Lakes. It's already being talked about. The Free Trade Agreement seems to allow for that as well. The key to basic survival does not depend on oil only. Water is even more important.

Bert's earlier columns can be viewed at 'hielem.ca'





## Business Directory

## Anti-euthanasia vote by Europeans hailed by Christian leaders

Jonathan Luxmore

Warsaw (ENI) – Church leaders in Europe have welcomed a vote by the Council of Europe parliamentarians not to approve euthanasia, saying they believe instead in good care being provided for terminally-ill patients.

"We are convinced there are alternatives to allowing euthanasia, without hiding away from the problem," said the Rev. Richard Fischer, an executive secretary of the Conference of European Churches (CEC), which groups 126 mostly Protestant, Orthodox and Anglican churches in Europe.

Fischer spoke to ENI after members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the 46-country Council of Europe rejected a resolution – introduced by Swiss Radical Liberal legislator Dick Marty – that would have approved doctor-assisted suicide for terminally-ill patients.

Marty noted in a report that two European countries, Belgium and the Netherlands, had passed laws that specifically address the issue of euthanasia. He argued that medical developments had made it "even more necessary to assist sick people in the last phase of life," and that public opinion in Europe favored allowing euthanasia in certain cases.

"There's no theological difficulty with allowing a terminally-ill patient to die naturally," said Fischer, who heads the European church conference's bioethics working group. "But all Christian churches agree the deliberate killing of suffering and dying human beings is a grave sin. We need good terminal and pastoral care, but also the continued prohibition of euthanasia."

The parliamentary vote was also welcomed by Cardinal Christoph Schoenborn of Vienna who said he believed parliamentarians had been influenced in their vote by the death of Pope John Paul II.

"Far from hiding his suffering, John Paul showed a courage and vigor which heartened the suffering and aged. In this way, he showed by his own example how a Christian death should look," Schoenborn said. "The European parliamentarians' stance expressed an acceptance of the humanist and Christian understanding of life and death," the cardinal said.

The resolution was rejected 138 - 26 in favor of a recommendation rejecting euthanasia and urging the provision of palliative care.

Calls to legalize euthanasia have increased in Europe over the past half-decade.

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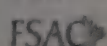
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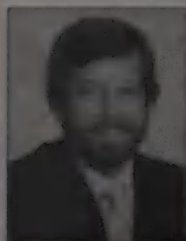
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## Classifieds

Engagement	Anniversaries	Obituaries
<p>With joy &amp; thankfulness, John &amp; Joan Klapwyk and Jack &amp; Heidi VanderSlikke announce the engagement of their children,</p>  <p><b>Willene &amp; James.</b></p> <p>Wedding to take place July 30, 2005, DV, at the New Life Christian Reformed Church in Guelph, Ontario.</p>	<p>June 22, 1940                      June 22, 2005</p> <p>With thankful hearts to the Lord</p> <p><b>PAUL W. LAMAIN AND MARGARET LAMAIN</b></p> <p>with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren would like to announce their <b>65th Wedding Anniversary</b> on D.V. June 22, 2005</p> <p>Corresponding address: Mr. &amp; Mrs. Paul W. Lmain Hillcrest Terrace 20 Fourth Ave Unit 107 Trenton ON K8V 5N3 Tel: (613) 392-4201</p> <p>1955                      June 24                      2005 Chatham, Ont.                      Chatham, Ont.</p>  <p><b>LOUIS AND HENNIE VAN RAMSHORST</b> (nee Tempelman)</p> <p>We trust that God will continue to bless. With love from your children and grandchildren: Bert &amp; MaryAnn Van Ramshorst, <i>Thunder Bay</i> Beth &amp; Arlin Friesen, Ashley, Kevin Mitchel, Matthew Fred &amp; Alice Cramer, <i>Thunder Bay</i> Carolyn, David, Richard, Lynda Henry &amp; Isabel Van Ramshorst, <i>Thunder Bay</i> Terrence, Sarah Eddy Van Ramshorst &amp; fiancée Monica, <i>Thunder Bay</i> Tyler Evelyn Van Ramshorst &amp; George Duncanson, Daniel, Amy, <i>Amsterdam</i></p> <p><b>Open House:</b> June 18, First Christian Reformed Church, <i>Thunder Bay</i> Home address: RR#2, <i>Thunder Bay</i> ON P7C 4V1</p>	 <p><b>AALTJE SMIT</b></p> <p>On May 5, 2005, Mrs. Aaltje Smit of Edmonton, widow of Roelief Smit, went to be with her Lord at the age of 105 years.</p> <p>Dear mother of Jenny (Geert) Bouwman in the <i>Netherlands</i>, Henny (Edt) Witten of <i>Edmonton, Alberta</i> Clara (Martin) Witten of <i>Edmonton, Alberta</i> Clarence Smit of <i>Los Angeles, California</i> Grace (Fred) Meyerink of <i>Caledonia, Ontario</i> and Alice (Albert) Bosma of <i>Legal, Alberta</i> Dear Oma of 18 grandchildren, 50 great-grand- children and one great-great-grandchild. One sister in the <i>Netherlands</i>, Roelefje Harink.</p> <p>The funeral service was held in Maranatha Christian Reformed Church with Reverend Art Verboon officiating.</p> <p>Correspondence: M &amp; C Witten, 11830 - 38 St Edmonton AB T5W 2H4</p>
<p><b>Birthdays</b></p> <p>With great joy we, the family of</p> <p><b>Gerrit Smit</b></p> <p>invite you to join us in celebrating his <b>70th Birthday.</b></p> <p>We are hosting an <b>Open House</b> on Sunday June 26, 2005 from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. at Covenant Christian School 6470 Reg. Rd. 14 Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0 <i>Best wishes only</i></p> <p>Home Address: Box 79 266 Goose Alley Goodwood ON L0C 1A0</p>	<p>1955                      June 28                      2005 Amhem, the Netherlands                      Brampton, Ontario</p> <p>... and they recognized that they had been with Jesus. Acts 4:13b</p> <p>We give praise and thanks to God together with our parents and grandparents</p>  <p><b>GERRIT AND ANNIE BLOEMENDAL</b> (nee Sielias)</p> <p>for his goodness &amp; faithfulness through <b>50 years of marriage</b></p> <p>Albert &amp; Helen Bloemendal Paul, Lauren, Trevor, Peter John &amp; Marg Bloemendal Kevin, Katy, Eric, Chrissy &amp; Adam Gerald &amp; Jenny Bloemendal James, Christy &amp; Jenna Harold &amp; Marg Bloemendal Bradley &amp; Natasha Ron &amp; Marg Laswick Justin, Kelsey &amp; Marina</p> <p>Please join us at an <b>Open House</b> to celebrate and congratulate our parents on Saturday, July 2, from 1:00 - 4:00 p.m. 23 Nanwood Drive, Brampton, Ontario <i>Best wishes only please. Your presence will be a gift to us.</i> Address: 1001 - 35 Kingknoll Dr, Brampton ON L6Y 5G5</p>	 <p>"Brother, Let me be your Servant"</p> <p><b>CORNELIS VANDER STELT</b></p> <p>Peacefully in his 76th year, while writing at his home, Cornelis (Casey) Vander Stelt passed away on May 23, 2005.</p> <p>He left behind his children and grandchildren: Eleanor Tamming, <i>Owen Sound</i> Katie Beth, Annalise, Mark, Daniel, Ruth Vander Stelt &amp; Patrick Marshall, <i>Aylmer, Quebec</i> Sara Jane, Nico, Nathaniel, Jan &amp; Lynda Vander Stelt, <i>Brantford</i> Kerri, Corine, Rebecca, Rachel Joshua Casey is survived by his sisters Elizabeth and Agnes, and brothers John, Joe, Walt, and Bill.</p> <p>Casey will be dearly missed by family, friends and by all those he helped through his ministry. Casey was admired for his drive and dedication to the cause of <b>Self Discovery of Imprisoned Persons.</b> The funeral service was held at Chalmers Presbyterian Church on May 27.</p> <p>Home address: 77 Springside Dr Hamilton ON L9B 1M6</p>
<p>Engelum (Fr)    Berlikum (Fr)    Grandville MI</p> <p>On July 1st., 2005</p>  <p><b>Susanna Born - Sijens</b></p> <p>Hopes to celebrate her <b>100th Birthday.</b></p> <p>Her 7 children: (Nijdest) &amp; Richt Born, <i>Joure (Fr)</i> Dewey &amp; Tina Born, <i>Byron Center MI</i> Amy &amp; (John) van Dokkumburg, <i>Hamilton ON</i> Harold &amp; Lucy Born, <i>Hudsonville MI</i> Louise &amp; (Ariet) Lindemulder, <i>Jenison MI</i> Steve &amp; Shirley Born, <i>Fort Wayne IN</i> Liz &amp; Roger Bultman, <i>Whitneyville MI</i></p> <p>And her 31 grandchildren, 71 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren, thank God for her long life and her example of Godly living. Congratulations from us all.</p> <p>Beppe lives at: Georgetown Manor Rm. 17 141 Port Sheldon Rd Grandville MI 49418 USA</p>	<p>With love from your children and grandchildren: Martin &amp; Cathy - Heidi, Katie, <i>Kitchener, Ont.</i> Art &amp; Sharon - Megan, Amy, Nicholas <i>Conestogo, Ont.</i> Letty, <i>Waterloo, Ont.</i> Ken &amp; Paula - Evan, Andrew, Elise, <i>LaGrange, Illinois</i> Gary &amp; Galya - Anastasia, <i>St. Petersburg, Russia</i> John &amp; Jody - Robbie, <i>London, Ont.</i> Jeanne, <i>St. Catharines, Ont.</i></p> <p>An <b>Open House</b> will be held on Sunday, June 26, 2005, following the 10 a.m. church service at First Christian Reformed Church, <i>Chatham, Ont.</i> <i>Best wishes only, please</i></p> <p>Home address: 40 Elm St Apt 224 Chatham ON N7M 6A5</p> <p>1955                      2005</p> <p>Thankful to the Lord for his many blessings, we</p> <p><b>REIND AND WILMA WIKKERINK</b> (nee Bosman)</p> <p>hope to celebrate our <b>50th Wedding Anniversary</b> on June 24, 2005.</p> <p>We praise God for our children and grandchildren: Janet &amp; Richard Blyleven, <i>Fisherville, Ont.</i> Nicole, Kristen, Jared, Brian. Wes &amp; Cynthia Wikkerink, <i>Waterloo, Ont.</i> Rebekah, Celeste Yolanda &amp; Barry Ryzebol, <i>Grand Valley, Ont.</i> Alyssa, David, Andrew, Michael</p> <p>Home address: PO Box#175 - 4 South End Drive CAYUGA ON N0A 1E0</p> <p>Dr. Remkes Kooistra passed away peace- fully at Holland Christian Homes in Bram- pton on Monday, May 30 at the age of 88. The obituary will be in the next issue.</p>	<p>We are deeply saddened, yet rejoicing, that the Lord has called home</p> <p><b>HERMAN KUGEL</b></p> <p>suddenly on May 13, 2005, after battling Parkinson's disease since 1988.</p> <p>Beloved husband of Eve Kugel.</p> <p>Dear father of Ann (Jerry) Jansen, <i>Frankford Ont.</i>; Ken, Joyce (Lance) Jeffrey, Sharon (Nick) DeVries, Elaine (Ian) DeGroot, all of <i>Belleville Ont.</i>; Anita (Casper) VanGurp of <i>Brampton</i> and Laureen (Ralph) Schumann of <i>Oakville</i>. Cherished grandfather of 20 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>We love you and will always remember you as a wise and loving husband and father.</p> <p>Mailing address: 80 Sidney Street Belleville ON K8P 3Y8.</p>



## Classifieds/Job Opportunities

### For Sale

For sale - Ruby model in Phase 2 of **Wellington Christian Homes** in Hamilton. Possession date June 16 with move-in date to be finalized. Please call (905) 389-1679 after 6 p.m. for information.

*The Ruby has 894 square feet of space consisting of kitchen, livingroom, master bedroom with a walk-in closet and a second bedroom with a smaller closet. The Ruby also has a balcony/patio and a storage area."*

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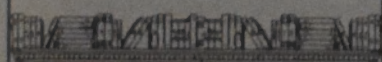


Picture available via E-mail

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#### COVENANT CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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For more information visit [pebbles37@sympatico.ca](mailto:pebbles37@sympatico.ca), or phone Deb at 519-539-1806.

#### The youth of SPRINGDALE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH need a youth pastor/director.

Springdale CRC is a congregation committed to the Reformed faith, located 10 minutes west of Newmarket, Ontario. The successful candidate will possess abilities to provide leadership to the church's ministry program for teens and young adults, and will show a strong desire to build relational ministries within the youth. Interested applicants are asked to call

John Olthof of the Search Committee at 905-939-8702, or email the committee at the [search\\_committee@hotmail.com](mailto:search_committee@hotmail.com) or fax # 905-939-9385.

JUBILEE



50 YEARS

## Dordt College Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications in the following areas:

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#### August 2006

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To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and curriculum vita/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy

Facsimile: 712 722-4496

Vice President for Academic Affairs

E-mail: [vpaa@dordt.edu](mailto:vpaa@dordt.edu)

Dordt College

Web site:

498 4th Ave. NE

[www.dordt.edu/offices/academic\\_affairs](http://www.dordt.edu/offices/academic_affairs)

Sioux Center IA 51250-1697

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JUBILEE



50 YEARS

## Dordt College

### Dean of Chapel

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Qualified candidates with a personal commitment to a Reformed, biblical faith and the mission of Dordt College should forward a letter of application and resume to Susan Droog, Director of Human Resources at the address listed below.

### Dordt College

498 Fourth Ave NE

Sioux Center, IA 51250

Phone: (712) 722-6017

Fax: (712) 722-1198

E-mail: [sdroog@dordt.edu](mailto:sdroog@dordt.edu)

*Dordt College does not discriminate as to sex, age, national origin, marital status or against those who are disabled.*

#### DUTCH SERVICE

June 26, 2005 3:00 p.m.  
in the

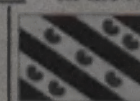
Ancaster Christian  
Reformed Church  
Rev. Jacob Kuntz  
will be preaching.



#### FRISIAN SERVICE

July 10, 2005 3:00 p.m.

in the Ancaster Christian



Reformed Church  
Rev. John Hellinga  
will be preaching.



## Classifieds



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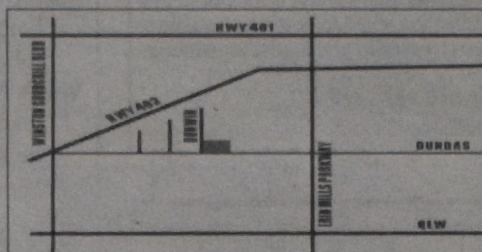
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### TWO CONCERTS YOU WILL NOT WANT TO MISS!

The 10th Annual International Music Festival  
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Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in Grimsby.  
The public will be invited to attend two concerts:



**Thursday, July 7** at 8:00 p.m. three renowned choirs will perform  
directed by their own conductors: the Boston City Singers  
(Massachusetts), Hamilton Conservatory Children's Choir  
(Ontario), and Young Naperville Singers (Illinois).

**Saturday, July 9** at 8:00 p.m. there will be a  
Massed Choir Concert featuring eight international choirs  
under the directions of the highly acclaimed Stephen Hatfield.  
Tickets for either of these concerts are \$10.00 per person and  
can be obtained at the Dutch Store in Grimsby prior to the concert, or  
at the door on the night of the performances.

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### Classified Rates

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*Christian Courier* is published on  
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days prior to publication date.

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All personal and family  
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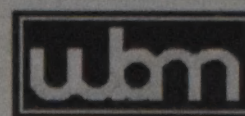
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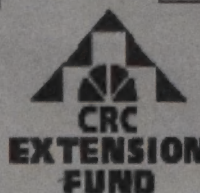
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## Events/Advertising

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Items appearing in this column are run free of charge if they advertise an admission-free event, if they accompany an ad for the same event, or at the discretion of CC. In case of free listing, space limitations apply. The charge otherwise is \$7.50 per line, or \$1.50 per 1/3 line, per insertion

**June 8 Hollandse Dag**, 10 a.m. at the **Moorefield** Community Centre. For more information call H. Rumph at 1-519-638-2053.

**June 8 Hollandse Dag** at 1st **Kingston** CRC, 10 a.m. Rev. Peter VanEgmond will speak. More info: E. Hiddema, (613) 546-5615.

**June 24-26** Christian Reformed Church of **Kentville, Nova Scotia** will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary. For more details contact Gerrit Tenyenhuys, ph.1-902-678-7641 or gtenyenhuys@nssympatico.ca or the church at 1-902-678-6293 or fax 1-902-679-5230. Email: kentvillecrrc@ns.sympatico.ca

**June 26** Dutch Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Jacob Kuntz will be preaching.

**July 1-3 Nobleford CRC** 100th year anniversary celebrations with picnic, banquet and services. For more information contact Bert/Pat Konynenbelt at (403)824-3442 or by e-mail at bpkbelt@telus.net

**July 7** The 10th Annual International Music Festival, Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in **Grimsby**, 8 p.m. Renowned choirs will perform directed by their own conductors: the Boston City Singers (Massachusetts), Hamilton Conservatory Children's Choir (Ontario), and Young Naperville Singers (Illinois). Tickets are \$10.00 per person.

**July 9** The 10th Annual International Music Festival, Mountainview Christian Reformed Church in **Grimsby**, 8 p.m. Massed Choir Concert featuring 8 international choirs under the directions of the highly acclaimed Stephen Hatfield. Tickets are \$10.00 per person.

**July 8-10 Charlottetown Christian Ref. Church** will be celebrating 50 years of ministry. For information, contact the church office at 902-894-4721 or email: chtowncrrc@pei.aibn.com.

**July 10** Frisian Service will be held in the **Ancaster** Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. John Hellinga will be preaching.

**July 23 Wieringermeerdag**, 10 a.m. at Queens Park Drive, Stratford. Potluck lunch. Phone 1-519-631-6234 for more information.

The Board of  
Salem

Christian Mental Health Association



warmly invites all members and friends of Salem to its Annual General Meeting:

Wednesday, June 15, 2005, 7-9 pm

Redeemer University College, Executive Dining Room  
777 Garner Road East, Ancaster, ON

## Envisioning Salem's Future

Discussion and Approval of New By-Laws  
Discussion and Approval of Kerncliffe Trust

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## News

## Africans ask: "Why isn't anyone telling the good news?"

Abraham McLaughlin

Johannesburg, SOUTH AFRICA— The way most newspapers and TV news tell it, there's little going on in Africa except poverty, famine, disease, and even genocide.

But there's more to Africa than hardship. And there are growing efforts to try to present a fuller, more rounded picture of this continent to the world.

## For example:

- Africa's economies grew by more than 5 percent last year—their biggest expansion in eight years. Central Africa's oil boom spurred 14.4 percent growth for that region.
- Ghana's stock exchange is regularly one of the highest-performing markets in the world; in 2003, it was No. 1, gaining 144 percent, according to one analysis.
- Exports to the US from 37 African nations jumped 88 percent last year, to \$26.6 billion. Jeans made in Lesotho are sold in US stores. Also, flowers from Kenya and vegetables from Senegal are regularly available in European shops.
- Use of cellphones and the Internet is growing faster in Africa than anywhere else, according to the United Nations.

These and other statistics are getting more focus amid efforts to boost Africa's image—along with the world's willingness to invest in the continent.

A prominent challenge came this week from Rwandan President Paul Kagame. Speaking in Kenya at the International Press Institute's annual gathering, he defied the media to tell the whole story.

"I urge you to play your role, not merely as watchdogs and whistle-blowers, but as advocates and educators in our joint venture to make Africa ... a better place," he said.

He further argued the negative portrayals hurt Africa's efforts to fix its problems. "One of the reasons why Africa has not been able to attract enough foreign direct investment, which we need for our development, is the constant negative reporting," he added.

## Open for Business

For sure, "Africa has other things going on besides wars and famines," says longtime journalist Carol Pineau, but traditionally the foreign media haven't focused on them. For instance, she says, "We make it sound as though there is no economic life in Africa."

Her documentary, "Africa: Open for Business," is a counterpoint. It was funded by the World Bank and screened at this year's Cannes Film Festival in France. It highlights 10 entrepreneurs profiting in Africa, including a cellphone magnate in Congo who worked with local residents to scrounge parts for a transmission tower, which they constructed amid a rebel attack on the capital. Now there are legions of cellphone users in Congo.

And some mainstream media are already changing their coverage.

"Africa is shifting more and more toward becoming a business story," says John Chiahem, chief Reuters correspondent in Southern Africa and chairman of the board of the Foreign

Correspondents' Association of Southern Africa. (This reporter is also a member of that board.) Increasingly, he says, Reuters is focusing on "opportunities in Africa" because the continent "has never looked more promising as a business destination."

He cites Barclays Bank's pending \$5.5 billion purchase of 60 percent of South Africa's largest bank, Absa, as evidence of the changing climate. It is Barclays' biggest investment outside Britain in its 100-year history. Observers say it shows even conservative bankers can be bullish on Africa.

Another news-balancing effort comes from a pair of South African men. Fed up with overwhelmingly negative cocktail-party talk about their country, they developed books and videos called "South Africa: The Good News."

They reminded South Africans of the country's progress since the start of its multiracial democracy in 1994. For instance, only 63 percent of South Africans were functionally literate back then. Now 80 percent are. The country's notoriously high murder rate has decreased by 25 percent since 1994. And South Africa ranks 25th among the world's economies, putting it in the top 15 percent.

Now the two men are turning their efforts to the rest of the continent, including focusing on the growth in multiparty democracy as evidence of dramatic progress. In the 1980s just a handful of free and fair elections took place in Africa. There were at least that many last year alone, although there are still numerous dictatorial, even tyrannical, regimes in places like Zimbabwe and Sudan.

Indeed, context is key to getting to the truth about Africa, argues Brett Bowes, one of the "Good News" founders. Many places in Africa may be a mess, he says, "But the question is: Was this a bigger mess five years ago or not?" In other words, has there been progress?

One thing blocking a fuller perception of Africa's progress may be implicit racism, argues Charles Stith, former US ambassador to Tanzania, now at Boston University.

There's a historic framework, he says, "that by definition sees Africa ... and Africans as inferior and negative," and makes most stories about the continent negative.

By contrast, he says, "China has problems, but we see and hear other things about China. Russia has problems, yet we see and read other things about Russia." That same standard, he says, should apply to Africa.

## Coverage of disasters still needed

To be sure, there's plenty of poverty and suffering across Africa. "We absolutely need coverage of wars and famines," says Pineau, the filmmaker. For instance, not to cover Sudan's Darfur province, where the US says genocide has occurred, "would be criminal."

But she turns the issue back to US readers and reporters and cites the Columbine school shooting, the Oklahoma City bombing, and other US tragedies, asking: "How would you feel as an American if all anyone ever talked about was the disasters of America?"

Abraham McLaughlin is a writer for The Christian Science Monitor

## News Digest

## Imagined terrorism

They're at it again, the so-called experts on terrorism—terrorizing us with their horrific visions of how terrorists might commit murder on a huge scale. In recent weeks, the experts have warned how easy it would be for terrorists to target public transportation on this continent the way they did in Madrid, Spain. And the U.S. government announced it is developing technology to protect airliners against attack from hand-held missiles fired from the ground as the planes are taking off.

In the past we've heard such experts describe how vulnerable our water supplies are to bio-terrorism. Major news programs have invited them to describe possible scenarios to the public, virtually providing a how-to blueprint for anyone with a loose screw. After the big power outage in the northeast, the experts explained how easy it would be for terrorists to do the same thing on purpose and with even more destructive results.

Recently the same men also offered us scary stories about what terrorists could do with nuclear material stolen or bought from countries like Iran and North Korea. In a democracy, it seems, it is necessary to scare the citizenry to provide a rationale for efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

But why on earth do we need detailed descriptions about how terrorists could taint millions of gallons of milk with botulism toxins and thus poison millions of parents and children?

"Why milk?" asks one newspaper article covering the report: "In addition to its symbolic value as a target—a glass of milk is an icon of purity and healthfulness—Americans drink more than 6 billion gallons of it a year." The article gives a detailed account of how a terrorist would accomplish such an outrage against the most 'innocent' of our beverages, one we associate most closely with children.

There is no way in a continent as vast and in a society as open as ours to make ourselves secure against all such insane schemes. Fortunately, the minds of the hypothetical terrorists have been less demonic than those of the 'experts' dreaming up such nightmare scenarios.

## Smart mother brain

From terrorists to mothers. A big leap, although in some quarters parents tend to be portrayed either by terrorizing their children or being terrified by them.

Leading brain scientists (that's not scientists who are brainy but scientists who study the brain) say that becoming and being a mother adds brain cells to the grey matter that enables you to think. That's contrary to modern mothers who complain that being with children all day reduces their intelligence due to lack of conversation with other adults.

I thought the focus would be on how much cleverness it requires to stay ahead of young children in contrast to conducting a conversation with your husband.

"How was your day?"

"Okay."

"Anything interesting happen?"

"Nah."

"What would you like for supper?"

"Whatever."

It turns out, however, that the new finding is in part due to the redefinition of intelligence to include things like your emotional intelligence.

I still suspect that a mother has to use the same kind of intelligence that generals at the Pentagon use to develop various tactical options and battle strategies while planning for transportation, supplies and surprise visits by politicians. Like generals, mothers also have to be prepared to alter their entire plans at a moment's notice when the weatherman proves unreliable. The studies have produced a book: Katherine Ellison, *The Mommy Brain: How Motherhood Makes Us Smarter*.

Those awaiting a similar book on fatherhood are in for a long wait.

## Perrier? Evian? Aquafina?

One of the things Canadians complain about most is the price of gas. Yet, many pay more for their drinking water—over \$1.00 a litre for some of the frenchified brands. Why do people shell out so much for what you can get out of the kitchen tap? Most reply, "Because it tastes better!"

In a taste test conducted by ABC News, however, the most expensive French brand (Evian) came dead last, losing out even to water taken from a public water fountain in New York City.